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FREDERICK THE GREAT

AND

MARIA THERESA.

VOL. II.

FREDERICK THE GREAT

AND

MARIA THERESA.

FROM HITHERTO UNPUBLISHED DOCUMENTS.

1740-1742.

BY

THE DUC DE BROGLIE,

MEMBER OF THE FRENCH ACADEMY.

FROM THE FRENCH

BY

MRS. CASHEL HOEY AND MR. JOHN LILLIE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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CONTENTS.

ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY BOMBAY BRANCH

CHAPTER IV.

MARIA THERESA IN HUNGARY—THE ESCALADE OF PRAGUE.

Belle-Isle goes to Prague to hasten the preparations for the expedition—He is well received—He is entrusted with the embassy to the Diet, and also with the command of the army—Maria Theresa reluctantly resolves to make proposals for peace to Frederick—The nature of those proposals—The mission of the English Minister (Sir Thomas Robinson) to Frederick's camp—Frederick rejects the proposals of Maria Theresa—His interview with Robinson—His troops enter Breslau—The beginning of the war—Entry of the French troops upon German territory—The King of England, Elector of Brunswick, promises his vote to the Elector of Bavaria, in exchange for the neutrality of Hanover—The French troops effect their junction with the Bavarian troops, and seize upon Linz and Upper Austria—Discouragement of the partisans of Maria Theresa and terror at Vienna—Maria Theresa retires to Hungary—Insecure position of that country—Opening of the Hungarian Diet at Presburg—Coronation of Maria Theresa—The Hungarian Diet reclaims its former privileges—Maria Theresa refuses to grant them—Discontent and threats of revolt at Presburg—Maria Theresa, contrary to the advice of her ministers, receives the Diet at the palace, and proclaims the insurrection or general rise of the nation in arms—Enthusiasm of the Hungarians—The insurrection is decreed—The co-regency is offered to the Grand Duke—A compromise between the Queen and the Diet establishes the liberties of Hungary on a new basis

—Impression made on Europe by events in Hungary—First germs of disagreement between the allies—Mistakes made by the Elector while in command of the army during the absence of Belle-Isle—He relinquishes the siege of Vienna, and marches on Prague—Fresh proposals are made to France and Prussia by Maria Theresa—Fleury and Belle-Isle reject them—Frederick appears to do likewise—Valori, at first full of confidence in his promises, afterwards conceives suspicions of his sincerity—Frederick sends Valori away from his camp in order to escape from his observation—Frederick negotiates secretly with England, through the English Minister, Lord Hyndford—The protocol of Klein-Schnellendorf—The town of Neisse yields to Frederick after a feigned siege, while the Austrian army, commanded by Marshal Neipperg, leaves Silesia without being molested in its retreat—Disastrous effect produced by this double manœuvre—Belle-Isle decides on leaving Frankfort in order to assume the direction of the siege operations before Prague in person—He falls ill at Dresden—Maurice de Saxe takes Prague by surprise, at night—Effect of this unhoped-for success—Frederick congratulates France, and revokes his promise to the English envoy 1

CHAPTER V.

The Moravian expedition and the quarrel of the two Marshals—Revolution at St. Petersburg—Accession of the Empress Elizabeth, who abandons Austria and makes advances to France—Arrival of Belle-Isle at Prague—Marshal de Broglie is sent to replace him—Discontent of Broglie; he quits Prague and returns to Frankfort—The Elector of Bavaria remains at Mannheim—The election takes place on the 26th of January, 1742—Triumph of Belle-Isle, and joy of the French Cabinet—Bad news from the army left in Bohemia—Marshal de Broglie is threatened at Pisek by the Grand Duke—He forces him to retire—Difficult position of the Marquis de Ségur, who is attacked by the Austrian general Khevenhüller—Broglie is pressed to go to his assistance—He demands the support of Frederick—Frederick's singular antipathy to Marshal de Broglie—The real cause of this

sentiment—Frederick announces that he is about to take the field in aid of the French—He repairs to Dresden to confer with Augustus III.—The Dresden Conference—Frederick proposes to march on Vienna, through Moravia, and demands the command of the French and Saxon troops—Opposition of Maurice de Saxe, and discontent of Marshal de Broglie—Ségur is blockaded in Linz, and forced to capitulate—Frederick perseveres with his expedition—Marshal de Broglie recalls the French troops—The Moravian expedition fails, and Frederick re-enters Bohemia—Disagreement between the French generals and diplomatists—Marshals de Broglie and Belle-Isle write to Versailles complaining of one another—Opinions of the minister and the Court—Fleury's vacillation—The Chevalier de Broglie—The Abbé de Broglie—Belle-Isle comes to France to defend himself—He is made duke and placed at the head of the army of Bohemia, while Broglie receives another command in Bavaria—The taking of Egra—Marshal de Broglie sends the news of his victory by his son, who is made Brigadier. . 113

CHAPTER VI.

THE DEFECTION OF FREDERICK.

Frederick's ill-humour on his return to Bohemia—Causes of his displeasure—He thinks of making his peace finally with Austria—He sends for the English envoy to come to Breslau and treat with him—Lord Hyndford's hesitation—The proposals which he transmits to Vienna are rejected by Maria Theresa—Frederick resolves to attack the Prince of Lorraine, in command of the Austrian army—Battle and victory of Chotusitz—Frederick does not pursue the vanquished Austrians, and re-enters into negotiations with them on the day after their defeat—Belle-Isle arrives at Prague—He finds Marshal de Broglie, who is afraid of being crushed by the junction of the Austrian troops, in a state of great anxiety—The two Marshals jointly attack Prince Lobkowitz—Fight and victory of Sahay—Belle Isle waits on Frederick, and tries to induce him to act in concert with the French army—His interview with the King: he cannot ob-

tain a promise of immediate action—News of the junction of the Prince of Lorraine and Prince Lobkowitz—Belle-Isle goes to Dresden to obtain the aid of the Saxon army—Broglie, forced to retire before the United Austrian troops, precipitately re-enters Prague—Last interview of Frederick and Valori—Fleury's despair—Disastrous effect of Frederick's defection upon France—Displeasure of the French public—Voltaire congratulates Frederick—His letter is intercepted and published: he is obliged to deny it—The motives alleged by Frederick to justify his defection examined—Conclusion 185

APPENDIX 273

FREDERICK II. AND MARIA THERESA

(1740-1742).

CHAPTER IV.

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Belle-Isle goes to Prague to hasten the preparations for the expedition—He is well received—He is entrusted with the embassy to the Diet, and also with the command of the army—Maria Theresa reluctantly resolves to make proposals for peace to Frederick—The nature of those proposals—The mission of the English Minister (Sir Thomas Robinson) to Frederick's camp—Frederick rejects the proposals of Maria Theresa—His interview with Robinson—His troops enter Breslau—The beginning of the war—Entry of the French troops upon German territory—The King of England, Elector of Brunswick, promises his vote to the Elector of Bavaria, in exchange for the neutrality of Hanover—The French troops effect their junction with the Bavarian troops, and seize upon Linz and Upper Austria—Discouragement of the partisans of Maria Theresa and terror at Vienna—Maria Theresa retires to Hungary—Insecure position of that country—Opening of the Hungarian Diet at Presburg—Coronation of Maria Theresa—The Hungarian Diet reclaims its former privileges—Maria Theresa refuses to grant them—Discontent and threats of revolt at Presburg—Maria Theresa, contrary to the advice of her ministers, receives the Diet at the palace, and proclaims the insurrection or general rise of the nation in arms—Enthusiasm of the Hungarians—The insurrection is decreed—The co-regency is offered to

the Grand Duke—A compromise between the Queen and the Diet establishes the liberties of Hungary on a new basis—Impression made on Europe by events in Hungary—First germs of disagreement between the allies—Mistakes made by the Elector while in command of the army during the absence of Belle-Isle—He relinquishes the siege of Vienna, and marches on Prague—Fresh proposals are made to France and Prussia by Maria Theresa—Fleury and Belle-Isle reject them—Frederick appears to do likewise—Valori, at first full of confidence in his promises, afterwards conceives suspicions of his sincerity—Frederick sends Valori away from his camp in order to escape from his observation—Frederick negotiates secretly with England, through the English Minister, Lord Hyndford—The protocol of Klein-Schnellendorf—The town of Neisse yields to Frederick after a feigned siege, while the Austrian army, commanded by Marshal Neipperg, leaves Silesia without being molested in its retreat—Disastrous effect produced by this double manœuvre—Belle-Isle decides on leaving Frankfort in order to assume the direction of the siege operations before Prague in person—He falls ill at Dresden—Maurice de Saxe takes Prague by surprise, at night—Effect of this unhoped-for success—Frederick congratulates France, and revokes his promise to the English envoy.

EARLY in July, Belle-Isle, who was led by Frederick's unsatisfactory attitude to apprehend that the thread of a precarious alliance might be broken, resolved to go in person to Versailles, to urge the immediate execution on the part of France of the convention of the 5th of June.

His journey was performed with the utmost celerity. He passed through Paris with no more delay than sufficed for changing horses, and did not take time to see his son who was at school

there. This literal "post haste" was an indirect rebuke to the habitual dilatoriness of the Cardinal, and, besides, Belle-Isle was not sorry to pounce upon any cabals against his personal position[1] which might be in process of incubation.

If he were at all uneasy on this point, he must have been speedily reassured. "The arrival of M. de Belle-Isle is a triumph," wrote D'Argenson, and, in fact, he found his credit intact, and the confidence inspired by his name greater than ever. His friend Madame de Vintimille, who was then very near the confinement in which she died, was at the height of favour. The rumour which had already spread of the Prussian convention, did the greater honour to its negotiator, because its difficulties had leaked out, and were generally imputed to the Cardinal's hesitation.

This was an obstacle which, it was said, only Belle-Isle could overcome. The main object of each of the many persons who were always discounting the ever-expected, but still delayed death of the aged minister, was to gain the ear of one so clearly indicated as the inheritor of power, and the Cardinal himself could not receive a rival, who, instead of aspiring to replace, was content to serve him, with too much distinction.

Every door was open to Belle-Isle, and no one

[1] "Mémoires du Duc de Luynes," vol. iii. p. 434. "Mémoires d'Argenson," vol. iii. p. 336.

had ears for anybody else. He arrived on the 11th of July, and wrote as follows to his brother, whom he had left at Frankfort, on the 12th :—

"Yesterday I had nine consecutive hours of conference, and out of them I spoke for at least seven, so that I am rather hoarse to-day. There will, however, be a Council this evening at which I shall not mend my chest."

On the 13th he wrote: "His Eminence took me all alone to the King, who made me sit opposite to him on the other side of the council-table, and I was there an hour and a half in presence of the Cardinal. I gave him a report of all that had passed at our sittings, and a sketch of the plan which now needed only his Majesty's approbation. Everything was said between the King and myself; the Cardinal hardly spoke, and only to sing our praises; the King lavished kindness upon me."[2]

The plan that Belle-Isle submitted for the King's approval, and to which the Cardinal gave this silent and melancholy assent was well contrived. According to the stipulations of the treaty, a French army, 40,000 strong, was to cross the Rhine

[2] Marshal Belle-Isle to the Chevalier de Belle-Isle, Versailles, July 12—14, 1741. (*Correspondances Diverses.*) Ministry of War. The archives of the Ministry of War contain two series of correspondence relative to this epoch, the one purely military and altogether official, the other treating of various matters, chiefly diplomatic. It is said that the latter collection is composed of private papers which Marshal Belle-Isle left at the department over which he was presiding at the time of his death.

without delay, and make for the very heart of the Austrian possessions, passing through Germany; in addition (and this was Belle-Isle's own idea), a second corps of 30,000 men was to cross the Austrian Low Countries and the bishopric of Liége, and take up a position which would enable them to march on Hanover, if the King of England, yielding at last to the entreaties of Maria Theresa, should decide upon lending his aid to Austria. This scheme, which was happily conceived on the military side, had also from the diplomatic point of view the advantage that it lent valuable aid in the way of intimidation to the effect which the ambassador had produced upon the petty Electors of the banks of the Rhine by his eloquence and his promises.

The question appeared to be, to whom should the conduct of these military operations be confided; but the only point really in debate was what part Belle-Isle would choose to play; whether that of ambassador, or that of general-in-chief? The choice was left to him, but Belle-Isle, while indicating his preference, did so after a fashion that showed he regarded himself as equally fitted for, and, indeed, equally indispensable to both functions. "The matter in discussion," he says, "being that which was commenced by me in my capacity of ambassador, and also in that of general of an army, I represented to his Majesty and the assembled ministers

that the negotiation had assumed such importance, it had become so difficult, complicated, and extended, and I had gained so much credit and consideration in the Empire by means of it, besides being thoroughly informed on all points, both as regarded localities and persons, that my place could not be supplied by any one whomsoever. I represented that, on the other hand, I had served during forty years with zeal, constant application and infinite labour, having always in view the attainment of the dignity of a Marshal of France, and commanding in that capacity; that the command for which the King now destined me was the most glorious and the most flattering which could be offered to any man, the matter in hand being the making of an Emperor and the conquering of kingdoms, and that it was evident if I were to consult my own taste, and my own convenience only, I should unhesitatingly prefer the command of the army, but, knowing that I must choose for the good of the state and the interests of the negotiation, I would not take my own preference into account at all."[3]

This disinterested offer was met just as Belle-Isle expected it would be. He retained both the command and the embassy, only he was not to act openly in his military capacity until his diplomatic mission should have been brought to a close by the election. Until then, the leadership of the army

[3] Unpublished Memoirs of Marshal Belle-Isle.

would remain in the hands of M. de Lenville, the first of the lieutenants-general, who would be in constant communication with him (the Marshal) and carry out, as far as possible, his instructions. To Marshal de Maillebois was given the command of the troops who were to act in western Germany.

Belle-Isle, having arranged all this, departed as suddenly as he had come, and on his return to Frankfort (25th July), he was enabled to announce to Frederick that the French troops would march at the beginning of August, and that the junction with the Bavarian army would be effected before the 15th. With all the good will in the world, greater speed would not have been possible.

I doubt very much whether Frederick approved of this double command, to be exercised at a distance and by deputy: but he was aware that Belle-Isle, being bound by regard for his own honour to secure the success of an adventure in which his renown was at stake, was obliged to make great concessions to avoid the risk of failure, and this obligatory subservience on the part of the Marshal suited the King of Prussia. He wrote, therefore, to Belle-Isle in the following terms, without any hesitation: "I congratulate the King of France on his having declared Marshal Belle-Isle generalissimo of his army of Germany. There is nothing, I think, to be added to the measures which have been taken, and I am persuaded that no obstacle to the sagacity of those

arrangements will present itself. . . . I am under a thousand obligations to you for the care and trouble you have taken in this affair, which cannot but make an immortal reputation for you."[4].

It was high time to satisfy Frederick, for at the moment when he was informed of the warlike plans of Belle-Isle, the pacific negotiation, that other operation on which he continued to keep an eye, made a considerable step in advance. Maria Theresa, being conquered, at least to all appearance, had resolved to make a concession of some importance, or rather she allowed one to be wrested from her. As may be supposed, the secret of the conclusion of the treaty with France had not been religiously kept, and a few days after the document was signed, the Queen was informed of the fact through the medium of the King of England. When this communication was made to the Austrian Council by the English minister, "They fell back in their chairs, as pale as corpses;" so the envoy tells us. At the same time, George II., who had come over to Hanover from England to watch the progress of events, made it known that he consented, according to the treaties, to place a corps of 22,000 men, composed of Danes and Hessians in his pay, and also a subsidy of 300,000*l.* sterling, at the disposal of the Queen.

[4] Frederick to Belle-Isle, July 30, 1741. "Political Correspondence," vol. i. p. 209.

The King was, however, well aware that assistance on this scale would be manifestly inadequate to enable Austria to hold her own against the coalition with which she was threatened, but he declared that nothing more should be obtained from him so long as a refusal to enter into the prudent transactions requisite for the union of the whole of Germany in a combination against French ambition was persisted in. "If the Court of Vienna," wrote the English Secretary of State to Sir Thomas Robinson on the 21st of June, "persists in risking all, rather than make any sacrifice to gain the King of Prussia, whose adhesion to the common cause is so necessary . . . it is not to be expected that the King should enter with the same degree of readiness and vigour into a war which would be hopeless and ruinous. You will enlarge upon all these points. If the Queen yields to your advice, you will yourself proceed to the camp of the King of Prussia; you will endeavour to appeal to his vanity by the glory of being the preserver (rather than the destroyer) of the House of Austria, the liberties of Europe, and the Protestant religion." [5]

In fulfilment of these instructions, the English envoy sought audience of the queen, and spoke to her with earnestness which his emotion rendered

[5] Lord Harrington to Robinson, June 21, 1741. A despatch intercepted by M. de Bussy, Minister of France in London. (*Correspondance d'Angleterre.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

almost eloquent. With tears in his eyes, he besought her to retreat from the dangers with which she was surrounded. She heard him to the end in silence, all her Councillors hung their heads and said nothing; then she broke into a transport of passion, declaring with great vehemence that to ask her to separate herself from her faithful Silesian subjects was to do violence, not to her policy, but to her conscience. Silesia was the key to her States; if the lower portion were given up, the whole province would be demanded, and the entrance of Bohemia, as well as Moravia, would then be undefended.

The dangers that threatened her were undeniable, but were they hers alone? Did they not threaten England as well as Austria? The English minister pointed out that the position was not the same; but she exclaimed, "Ah, yes, I know; there is that accursed ditch (*marais maudit*) to divide you from the continent. Would to God that there were no such thing, that you were like us, and that the King your master, had all his States in the heart of Germany! We should then see whether he would be in such a hurry to surrender the best of them, that portion which defends all the rest. And why am I only to make every sacrifice? Why does not the King of England address himself to the other princes of the Empire also? They are threatened like myself. Why does he not talk to the Elector of Bavaria? His pretensions would perhaps be less lofty and cer-

tainly better founded than those of the King of Prussia. Above all, why does he not put his troops in the field? Ah! if the King would only send his soldiers forward!"

The discussion lasted for several days. The Queen, exerting all the ingenuity and imagination of despair, proposed a number of expedients by which she might escape from that particular one which wounded her pride on its most sensitive point. She proposed to entice the Elector of Saxony by promising him Lusatia, a fief of the crown of Bohemia, which, she said, Frederick had ruined by his "felony," and to win the Elector of Bavaria by offering him Tuscany or the Milanese; she threatened to throw herself into the arms of France by ceding a portion of Flanders to Louis XV.; and at last, when she was worn out by the struggle, she was brought to make the following concessions: 2,000,000 guilders[6] should be paid to the King of Prussia as the price of the total evacuation of the Austrian territory, and no claim should be made on him for the injury inflicted on Austrian subjects. In exchange for Frederick's renunciation of his pretended rights over Silesia, the Queen would offer him an equivalent in the Netherlands, Guelderland for example, or even, if it were necessary, Limburg. Lastly, if those conditions were refused, the English minister was authorized, at the last extremity, not

[6] 200,000*l.* sterling.

to promise, but to hold out a hope of the cession of the Duchy of Glogau in Silesia. And yet, when it was necessary to put these proposals in writing, Maria Theresa could not bring herself to sign them. This word was too strong, that concession went too far, the other promise was too formal, and the paper, scored with erasures made by a nervous hand, was sent back several times to be re-copied.

At the last moment, when Sir Thomas Robinson, on taking leave of the Queen, betrayed some doubt of the success of his mission, she said, "I hope very much that you will not succeed. I appreciate your good intentions, but I pity you for what is before you. Your mission in Silesia will be as vain as Count Gotter's was at Vienna." Then, just as he was leaving her presence, she recalled him; "Try at least to save Limburg," she said; "I do not know whether I have any right to cede it. I have promised the states of Brabant that nothing shall be taken from their territory."

The envoy was no sooner gone, than, preparing beforehand for the refusal she hoped to receive, she employed her grandmother, the Dowager Empress Amelia, to sound her cousin, the Electress of Bavaria (also a granddaughter of the Dowager Empress), as to whether the Elector might not be induced to withdraw his claims by the offer of advantages similar to those that were proposed to Frederick. "I deceive my ministers," she wrote, in

a confidential note to Count Kinstri, one of her councillors; (he and Bartenstein had ventured to speak in the same sense as herself;) "and I make you the depositary of my real feelings. They are going to read points given by Robinson. As the latter *has made himself heard*, even to threats, it is necessary to try to have recourse to the open door on that side, and to conciliate him. . . . My firm resolution is never to give up anything in Silesia, still less all the lower part. . . . I will let them haggle a little, and they may sound Robinson upon that. This is the whole of my idea: God forbid that I should think of doing it—far from that! Robinson will be detained; they will amuse him until an answer comes from Bavaria."

The next day the fear of having gone too far succeeded to the hope of being refused: "I am sure," she writes, "that the King accepts the proposal of Silesia, for which I am inconsolable. I have directed an attempt to be made for the Low Countries, if he would evacuate Silesia. . . . With Robinson nothing can be done, for they have taken it into their heads to have Silesia, and they will have it, but, woe betide them (*Weh denen*), especially if they catch me in an ill mood, as I am at present. I wish very much to speak to you. Try to find an opportunity, even if it should be during vespers."[7]

[7] D'Arneth, vol. i. pp. 226, 236, 394, 395. Räumer, *Beiträge zur neuen Geschichte.* D'Arneth scrupulously reproduces the

Sir Thomas Robinson's opinion of Maria Theresa at this time was that she possessed far more capacity than might have been supposed from her want of experience, but that she was of too hasty a temper, and inclined to rely too much upon the influence of her attractions of person and manner. He was destined to be brought into contact with an equally hasty temper, but much inferior attractions, at the Prussian camp. It was the evil chance of the unlucky diplomatist to find himself between two imperious natures. Sir Thomas Robinson was to join Frederick at the little town of Strehlen, to which he had removed his headquarters, and he was destined to find the King in a state of jubilant excitement over the news just received from France, and the certainty of having, thenceforth, three armies, in addition to his own, placed at his disposal. Never was mood less propitious to the opening of a negotiation than Frederick's, and besides, Valori had come from Breslau to the King's headquarters on receiving the news of the English mission, and was on the watch to ascertain what sort of reception would be given to the envoy.

A few days before Sir Thomas Robinson's arrival, the King, who had been warned of his coming, drew near to Valori, during the military manœuvres, at

Queen's incorrect French and bad spelling in these private notes. The translators adhere strictly to the clumsy phraseology of the original.

which the latter was invariably present, and said in a whisper, "I want to speak to you, without appearing to make a mystery of it. Stroll about my camp after dinner, and see if you can find a favourable moment."

Dinner being over, Frederick contrived to take Valori apart unperceived, and said to him: "Robinson is coming, and Lord Hyndford has told me what he brings. They offer me an equivalent for Silesia in the Netherlands. This proposal is a snare to embroil me with you, but I will secure full time for the King to act, by asking for leisure to reflect, and then I will make such big proposals that they cannot accept them. I will ask them for the whole of the Catholic Low Countries. I hope the King will be thankful to me for this communication. He has, however, done well in placing troops on the Meuse to oppose the King of England, for you may rely on my word that prince is more and more the idol of Germany, and nothing but a great effort on your part can disconcert his measures."[8] Then, after he had laughingly taken credit to himself for so cleverly duping the English, he added, "Is it my fault if they are such fools?"

Frederick probably thought, on reflection, it would be better to cut the conversation with Robinson short, and to employ menace rather than cunning,

[8] Valori to Amelot, July 28, 1741. (*Correspondance de Prusse.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

for, when the day of audience arrived, he hardly gave Sir Thomas time to state his proposals, before he rose and stood before him in an attitude of simulated surprise and indignation. The offer (which was indeed a mistaken one) to pay him two hundred thousand pounds for retiring out of Silesia, seemed to exasperate him particularly. "Am I a beggar," he exclaimed, "that I should be offered money? Have I made war for that? Am I supposed to want to sell the fame and the interests of my house? Go and offer money to a petty prince, like the Duke of Gotha and his fellows; I am of those who would rather give money than take it; but where should the Court of Vienna get it to give? This is just like its usual pride and effrontery."

The proposed cession of Austrian Guelderland was equally ill-received. "Podewils," said the King, turning to his minister, who was present at the audience, "how much of the Duchy of Guelders is still in the possession of Austria." "Very little," replied the minister, with a bow. "You see, this is another beggarly trick (*gueuserie*) that they propose to play me." So violent was his anger, that Sir Thomas Robinson thought the moment had come for bringing out the Limburg proposal. "I cannot understand," said the King, "how Austria can think of stripping her frontier in this way. Has she any right to do it? Has she not treaties with Holland that prevent it?" Frederick was

right; by a treaty made with Holland in 1713, and which is known in diplomatic history as the Barrier Treaty, Austria had pledged herself to maintain a line of defensive fortifications against France on the Netherland frontier, and this, of course, implied that she should never alienate that territory. "Besides," continued Frederick, "I do not want to have anything to dispute about with either Holland or France; they have not offended me, and they would be disturbed if I came into their neighbourhood. And then, who is to guarantee these cessions that you propose to me?" Robinson begged the King to observe that his Government, by acting as mediator, also gave guarantees. "Ah, guarantees!" exclaimed Frederick, "and who cares about guarantees now-a-days? Did not everybody guarantee the Pragmatic Sanction? Did you not guarantee it yourselves? Why don't you all come to the aid of the Queen, then?" "We cannot answer for everything," said Robinson, "but if Austria is pushed to extremity, she will have friends." "Who are they?" "There will be the Russians, who cannot resist Turkey without Austria." "Good! As to the Russians I have nothing to say, but I have means of taking care of myself with them." "There are other powers who have engagements, and will fulfil them, however painful those duties may appear." The King laid his finger on his nose, and cut Sir Thomas short,

by saying, "No threats, sir, if you please, no threats."

Podewils, in a terrible fright, struck in at this point with a few words of conciliation, and Robinson, recovering from a momentary emotion, said quietly, "I use no threats, Sire, I only state that which cannot fail to occur; it is my zeal for the public good that brings me here." "The public ought to be very much obliged to you; but hear me: as for Russia, I have told you about that; I have nothing to fear from the King of Poland; the King of England is my kinsman, he will not attack me, and if he does, the Prince of Anhalt has an army which will take care of him." "But," said Robinson, "are you not afraid that the Queen, in despair, may throw herself into the arms of France?" On this point the King would not make any answer, but said, with a raised voice and theatrical emphasis, "I am at the head of an invincible army, I am master of a country which I will have, which I ought to have, and I would rather die with all my men than let myself be driven, or rather bought, out of it. My ancestors would come out of their graves to reproach me with betraying the rights that I hold from them. And what would be said of me if I were to abandon an enterprise which has been the first act of my reign, entered upon after due reflection, steadily pursued, and which I am resolved to carry out to the end? Is it for a Protestant sovereign

to counsel me to replace poor, oppressed Protestants under the dominion of a persecuting Catholic clergy? After all, I am the conqueror, and it is for the conqueror to make conditions. To-day I demand Silesia and Breslau, and if I do not obtain them to-day, in six weeks I shall demand four more duchies." "Is this your Majesty's final decision," asked Robinson, "and the answer that I am to take to the Queen?" "Yes, it makes me as sick as a pregnant woman to have the same question put to me over and over again." Sir Thomas Robinson begged that he might at least be allowed to explain in detail to Podewils the bearing of the Queen's proposals, on handing him the text of them, but the King said, "No, sir, it is useless to think of it."

He then turned his back, took up his hat, and retired behind the curtain that divided the tent. Sir Thomas remained alone with Podewils; the one was as much disconcerted as the other.

"You trust in France," said Sir Thomas; "she will forsake you." "No, no," replied Podewils; "France will not leave us in the lurch; unless, indeed," he added, after a few moments' hesitation, "we were to leave her in the lurch ourselves."[9]

[9] Coxe's "House of Austria," vol. iii. ch. xcix. pp. 420—423. Räumer, *Beiträge zur neuen Geschichte.* Droysen, vol. i. pp. 300—304. We have two different narratives of this curious conversation, one in Sir Thomas Robinson's despatch, quoted almost in

In the evening Frederick sent for Valori, and passed three hours in conference with him. He gave him a version of the morning's audience, ridiculing the embarrassed air and declamatory tone of Sir Thomas Robinson, and laughing at his absurd enthusiasm about the Queen of Hungary. "Will you believe," said the King, "that he said to me if I could only see her, I should fall in love with her, and would be thinking of giving her crowns rather than depriving her of them?" Then he broke out into protestations of his admiration of Belle-Isle, and his friendship for him. "Assure him," said Frederick, "that I ask no better than to be associated with him, and that we shall fight together like Eugène and Marlborough; I will be whichever he pleases." But for all this, when Valori availed himself of the opportunity to press him to give his minister at Frankfort the standing of an ambassador, and decisive instructions to vote for the Elector of Bavaria, Frederick merely said, "When you shall have crossed the Rhine."[1]

Again, that there might remain no lingering

full by Coxe and Räumer; the other in a Prussian report inserted in the *Politische Correspondenz*, vol. i. p. 297. As those two versions are not entirely similar, I have combined them, and supplemented the one by the other. Frederick gives a much altered account of this scene in his "Histoire de mon Temps."

[1] "Mémoires de Valori," vol. i. p. 120. Valori to Belle-Isle, August 6, 1741. (*Correspondance de Prusse.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

doubt of his determination never to retire from Silesia, he selected this moment to effect the entry of his troops into Breslau, contrary to the formal agreement that had been come to with the municipality, and under the pretext that the intrigues of the clergy with Catholic old ladies and old gentlemen were endangering the security of his possession of the place. The occupation, we learn from Frederick himself, was effected by a trick: he had demanded passage for a single regiment, which was merely to march through the city, but, the gates being opened for this purpose, the whole of the troops passed in, to come out no more. The burgomaster and aldermen (*échevins*) were absent, having been invited by the King to witness a military parade, at which all the diplomatists residing at Breslau were also spectators. The only names omitted from the list of invitations were those of the two English agents, and this was done that they might be eye-witnesses of the operation. Robinson left Breslau on the following day, and carried the news to Maria Theresa, who was informed, at the same time, that the Electress of Bavaria refused to be a party to any negotiation with her husband. Everything failed the young Queen at one and the same moment.

"Breslau is taken," she wrote to Kinski, "our proposals are rejected. All is over; come and see me; I am much cast down, but do not say any-

thing to my old man (*mon vieux*)." The Queen alluded to Bartenstein.

II.

The die was then cast for war, and war was indeed already begun with a happy combination of prudence and energy, in which the personal action of Belle-Isle was revealed. From the 31st of July, the Elector of Bavaria, having made himself master of Passau in Upper Austria by a sudden and unexpected attack, awaited the arrival of the French troops, who commenced their march at the beginning of August. The moment at which a French army set foot on German soil would be a critical one, considering the state of mind in which so many disastrous recollections had left the German population. The excitement was great; pamphlets, in which the hereditary ambition of the House of Bourbon was denounced, were circulated, and Louis XV. was accused, either of desiring to dismember the territory of the empire, or of claiming to impose a choice upon the electors by force: nay more, he was actually charged with aspiring to the imperial throne in his own proper person.[2] If the alarm were to become general, and to coincide with the regular session of the Diet of Ratisbon, the Federal Assembly, awakening from its accustomed torpor,

[2] For the effect produced by the entry of the French troops into the empire, see Appendix A. at the end of vol. ii.

might be urged to declare that the interests, not only of the belligerent parties, but of the whole Empire, were involved, and to issue orders to the presidents of circles for the arming of their contingents. A demonstration of this kind, which the agents of Maria Theresa were constantly striving to bring about, would have had a most injurious moral effect, although its material consequences might not have been important. Belle-Isle had foreseen and provided for the case, and, by dint of seeking a fair pretext for the military movements that he was to command, he had fixed upon one which, if not very valid in reality, at least saved appearances. France declared that not only was she not pursuing any object of personal ambition, but that she was not making war on the Queen of Hungary on her own account; she did not pronounce upon the legitimacy of the Elector's claims, but she held herself bound by the obligations of honour and relationship not to allow the House of Bavaria to perish, and she put herself forward to preserve Charles Albert against the mischances of his enterprise. The French soldiers were merely auxiliaries of the electoral army, and, the better to preserve that character, the Elector remained generalissimo of all the united forces, and the French regiments added the flag that carried the Bavarian colours to their own standards.[3]

[3] See Appendix B. at the end of vol. i. for proof that the distinction between the recognition of the pretensions of the House

The severe discipline which M. de Lenville, Belle-Isle's lieutenant, forced the invading army to observe, served still more effectually to quiet the public mind.

After the passage of the Rhine had been accomplished without any difficulty, through the exertions of Marshal de Broglie, who commanded at Strasburg, the troops had, in order to reach Bavaria, to cross the territories of several petty sovereigns from whom nothing was required, except what was called in the diplomatic language of the day, "inoffensive passage" (*transitus innoxius*). This epithet, very rarely justified by the facts, was really applicable on the present occasion. Not only were the soldiers restrained from pillaging or inflicting injury or annoyance upon the inhabitants, but everything necessary for their subsistence was paid for on a liberal scale. The inhabitants of the districts through which the troops marched were equally surprised and delighted; they profited by the passage of the foreigner instead of suffering from it, and hastened to offer supplies of provisions, for which they were highly paid. "We have abundance, even affluence of everything," wrote Maurice de Saxe, who was overjoyed to find himself at the head of a division; "the peasants even bring

of Bavaria, and the protection guaranteed to the security of its States was the diplomatic ground which Fleury had taken in his relations with the Elector, even before the death of Charles VI.

us tame rabbits of every colour, because they know that the French eat them. All the officers combine to observe good discipline, and this spirit has passed on to the men." Another general officer wrote to Belle-Isle, "We have changed all the Germans, and turned their heads."[4] Under these excellent conditions the march was rapid and easy, and on the 10th September, the allied armies encamped before Linz, in Upper Austria, three days' march from Vienna. The Elector made his solemn entry into the town, from which the Austrian authorities retired without any attempt at resistance.

Diplomatic success kept pace with military progress in realizing the hopes of the allies. Information was received simultaneously that the Diet of Sweden had summoned up confidence, and was placing itself in open hostility to Russia, and that the King of England, trembling in Hanover at the mere apparition of the troops of Marshal de Maillebois, was sending an envoy to Versailles to sue for mercy for his little State. Fleury offered, in return, to guarantee the neutrality of the Hanoverian territory, in concert with Frederick, on condition that the Elector (King George) should cease to oppose the Bavarian election. The arrangement was agreed to, and when this desertion became

[4] D'Aubigné to Belle-Isle, August 20; Maurice de Saxe to Belle-Isle, August 23; Ségur to Belle-Isle, August 31. (*Correspondances diverses.*) Ministry of War.

known, there was general dismay among the partisans of Maria Theresa. In vain did George protest that he was treating as Elector and not as King; in vain did the English Cabinet, with Walpole at its head, assume that it took no cognizance of a transaction which did not concern England; that was a nominal rather than a real distinction between functions and interests so closely united, and it neither deceived nor reassured anybody. The failure of so powerful an ally appeared to be the signal for a general desertion.[5]

This good news, as we may readily suppose, enabled Belle-Isle to celebrate the fête of St. Louis at Frankfort, with the brilliancy of an anticipated triumph. All the town, all the nobility, all the petty princes of the surrounding districts, all the foreign ministers, hastened to pay their compliments (by proxy) to the King of France, in the magnificent apartments occupied by the embassy, which accommodated with ease fifteen secretaries, twelve pages, fifty lackeys, four heyducs, four couriers, and more than a hundred persons employed in the

[5] The treaty of the King of England with France, guaranteeing the neutrality of Hanover, was signed on September 27, but the negotiations began at the end of August, and were known from that time. M. de Bussy to Amelot, September 6, 1741; "Correspondance d'Angleterre;" Fenelon to Amelot, September 20—26, 1741; (*Correspondance de Hollande*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The latter correspondence attests the disastrous effect which the desertion of the King of England produced on the friends of Maria Theresa.

service of the ambassador. The rejoicings lasted several days. The gardens were illuminated, a French comedy was played by actors from Paris; there was jousting on the water, a grand display of fireworks, a ball, and a supper given to forty-eight guests in a room specially constructed for the purpose. The Maréchale, who was nearly twenty years younger than her husband, presided at these festivities with the dignity of a queen. The cost was three hundred thousand livres. "I am frightened at our expenditure," wrote Belle-Isle, who, beforehand and from afar, beheld the cloud which would pass over the Cardinal's brow; "but if we make the Elector of Bavaria Emperor, we shall never have placed our funds more wisely." [6]

That contagious complaint, discouragement, spread from the friends of the Queen even to her subjects. Vienna, in particular, was in consternation, expecting to be attacked from hour to hour. The people rose in the streets; the wealthy and the noble took flight; the Danube was covered with boxes full of precious things, which their owners were carrying off to places of safety. If we are to believe the report of the French Chargé-d'affaires, the fidelity of the capital was shaken by fear. Vienna dreaded the horrors of a siege. Again it began to be said that after all it was to raise the Grand Duke to the

[6] Belle-Isle to Amelot, August 23, 1741. (*Correspondance de l'Ambassade à la Diète.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Empire that such peril was incurred, and it was hard that the people should have to suffer thus for a foreigner. "The talk that was formerly indulged in against the Elector of Bavaria and against the French nation," writes Vincent, the Chargé-d'affaires, at about this time, "has subsided. It appears that persons of quality, at least those who have remained here, have adopted the sentiments of the people on this subject. Many of the latter make no difficulty about saying that they are not likely to want for a master, and that any rule will be the same to them, provided it be not that of the Grand Duke, who is the cause of all the public misfortunes." [7]

The spread of these sentiments was rendered the more rapid by the absence of the Queen, for the mere sight of her exercised an all-powerful influence over the people. Even before Sir Thomas Robinson's return to the Prussian camp, Maria Theresa had left Vienna with her husband for Hungary, not so much with the object of securing her personal safety, which is the general statement, as that she might take solemn possession of the crown whose title she bore. Maria Theresa's retreat into Hungary, is, as we know, of all the incidents of her noble life, that one which made the greatest impression upon her contemporaries, and has left the deepest mark in the memory of posterity. The new details which

[7] Vincent to Amelot, August 26, 1741. (*Correspondance de Vienne.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

we owe to M. d'Arneth place this historic scene in an aspect which differs a little from the popular tradition, but is equally dramatic.

The step itself was not wanting in boldness, for the shelter which the august fugitive was about to seek in that distant country was anything but secure. It needed a concurrence of entirely novel circumstances to make the fidelity of Hungary the supreme hope and the last resource of the Austrian monarchy when brought to bay. Hitherto, on the contrary, the turbulence of a wild population placed on the confines of Christian civilization, the stern pride of the nobles, the spirit of independence among the lesser gentry, their attachment to feudal principles which were incompatible with the new requirements of societies under regular government, the various races and the different religions that jostled each other in their tumultuous assemblies, had all contributed to make the Kingdom of St. Stephen the least submissive portion of the Empire, and the most accessible to intrigues and provocation from without. In all the preceding wars, the unruly nature of the Hungarians was an element upon which the enemies of Austria had reckoned with confidence which was the more frequently justified, because in Hungary, as in Poland, revolt was a legal proceeding, provided for by the constitution, and subjects who held that their privileges were slighted by the sovereign, had a right to make use of it.

This strange right, which was still, at the com-

mencement of the century, officially inscribed in the oath to be taken by the kings of Hungary (although several attempts had been made to expunge it), had been recently put in action during the last wars of Louis XIV. by a factious person named François Rakoczy, half knight, half tribune, who had established a real republic at Presburg, in open rebellion against Vienna, and had maintained it for twenty years. Abuse had, indeed, produced reaction, and the imperial authority, restored after its eclipse, had finally abolished that singular privilege, with other less important ones. Charles VI. had even succeeded in obtaining beforehand from the Diet the unconditional recognition of the female succession instituted by the Pragmatic Sanction, but the question was whether former pretensions would not be again advanced in the face of an enfeebled power, and whether the pledges given would be redeemed by a country where no woman had ever reigned, and the name of queen was not even used in official language. The uncertainty in this respect was so great, that when it became necessary to call upon the Diet of Presburg to assist in meeting the public needs, all the Councillors of Maria Theresa had urged that the succours to be demanded should consist of money and not of men, because, they said, once the Hungarian troops have taken up arms, nobody can answer for what use they may make of them.[8]

[8] D'Arneth, vol. i. p. 256 and following.

At the first moment, however—either because fidelity to the monarchy had become more deeply rooted in Hungary during recent years than was supposed, or because the chivalrous nation was moved by generous feeling at the aspect of the illustrious and unfortunate princess who threw herself upon its protection—the Queen was welcomed on her arrival at Presburg in far different fashion from that which the desponding Councillors who accompanied her expected. The Diet, which was opened almost immediately after her arrival, did, indeed, put forward its claim for the restitution of most of the abolished privileges without delay, but the two Chambers which composed it, agreed with one consent to postpone the discussion of that question until they had given a striking proof of their loyalty by allowing the Primate, who was their president, to place the crown of St. Stephen on the head of its young heiress.

The festival of the Coronation, which took place on a Sunday in summer, under the glowing sky, in the midst of general rejoicing, was a brilliant and touching spectacle. From early dawn the streets were crowded, and the nobles came from every part of the kingdom to escort the sovereign's state coach. Nothing could exceed the variety and the splendour of the costumes of those noble cavaliers, and the caparisons of their horses; the eye was dazzled by the mixture of shining stuffs, rare furs, and glittering

jewels. The Queen herself, who laid aside her mourning for the occasion, was magnificently adorned with all the crown jewels, and they seemed only a fitting tribute to her beauty. The Archbishop received her at the entrance of the cathedral, and performed his sacred office without omitting any of the ancient ceremonies. It must have been both charming and affecting to see that generous, but weak woman fulfilling gravely and unhesitatingly the warlike rites which had been instituted to perpetuate the memory and revive the example of those rude champions of the faith who had fought against the infidel. In a voice tremulous with age, and broken by tears, the old prelate dictated the formal oath, from which only the ridiculous clause that provided for and admitted rebellion, was omitted; in her turn, the Queen, kneeling before him, promised, in a sweet, but firm voice, to defend the Church, and respect the liberties of her subjects. She was then invested with the mantle of the royal saint, and the hilt of his antique sword was placed in the slender right hand that could hardly grasp it, while on her pure and open brow was placed the diadem, which at that moment seemed especially to merit the name of "the angelic crown" bestowed upon it by popular tradition.[9]

[9] Voltaire asserts in *Le Siècle de Louis Quinze*, that the clause which provided for the case of revolt had been re-established by Maria Theresa at her accession, and thus explains the devotion

On the conclusion of the Coronation service the procession repaired to all the churches in the town in succession, according to the obligatory ceremonial, and finally halted at the foot of an acclivity called the Königsberg, where a superb black horse, richly caparisoned, its bridle held by the chief of the illustrious house of Esterhazy, awaited the Queen. Maria Theresa mounted the noble animal most gracefully, and galloped up to the summit of the Königsberg, from which she overlooked the vast extent of the plain. Then she drew the sword of the saint and king from its sheath, and waved it to the four cardinal points of the horizon in succession. It was after this fashion that the sovereigns of Hungary made known to their people their resolution to defend them against every enemy, from whatever side peril might arise. The misfortunes which were now threatening them gave the old symbol a touching meaning, and this was keenly felt by the multitude; thousands of enthusiastic voices awoke the echoes with the shout, "Long live Maria Theresa! Long live our king!" and thousands of drawn swords flashed in the air like fire. The emotion was general; the old English minister, Sir Thomas Robinson, who could not take his eyes off the object

of the Hungarians to her. The error in Voltaire's statement has been pointed out by Coxe, who quotes the text of the coronation oath. M. d'Arneth confirms this. "Refutations," vol. i. p. 271.

of his worship, wept tears of admiration. "The Queen is grace itself:" he wrote, immediately after the coronation; "when she raised her sword and bade defiance to the four quarters of the world, it was easy to see that she needed neither that weapon, nor any other, to make a conquest of those who approach her. The old, worn mantle of St. Stephen became her as well as the richest garment.

"'Illam, quidquid agit, quoque vestigia vertit,
Componit furtim, consequiturque decor.'"[1]

And yet, notwithstanding this unhoped-for welcome, those who were near the princess could observe that, during the whole day, she had been sad, pale, and downcast. Hardly even when the popular acclamation had reached its height, did a faint colour tinge her cheek, and her eyes brighten with that sweet and lambent lustre, which, as the German historian tells us, had an irresistible charm. There were moments when it might have been supposed that, feeling herself isolated in her triumph, she was searching with an uneasy glance amid the crowd for a friend's face, which it was difficult to find. D'Arneth tells us what it was that troubled Maria Theresa's joy. It was her regret at being unable to share it with the beloved husband without whom no happiness was possible to her, and even her greatness did not seem to be legitimate.

[1] D'Arneth, vol. i. pp. 267, 268. Coxe's "House of Austria."

When she placed herself under the protection of her subjects, she had hoped that she might induce them to accept the regency of the Grand Duke, to which the other States had already reluctantly submitted, but at the first word that she spoke to her warmest partisans, she found the hope was delusive. It was enough that they had consented to waive the question of the renewal of the old privileges until after the Coronation; it would not do to reveal that the establishment of a new, unknown power, created in favour of a stranger, had even been thought of. The Grand Duke, having no place in the ceremony assigned to him by etiquette, had to refrain from figuring in it; all the day long he walked about unperceived in the city, placing himself in the way of the procession at the entry of certain cross streets, so that he might exchange a look with his wife as she passed. It was not until evening, when he resumed his place of honour at the dinner which followed the ceremonies of the coronation, that gladness beamed from the face of his noble consort.[2]

That which had appeared impossible on the eve was no easier on the morrow. No sooner had the emotions of the Coronation day subsided than a discussion began in the two Chambers, or as they were then called, the two "Tables" of the Diet, upon the

[2] D'Arneth, vol. i. pp. 277, 279, 403. This latter detail is given in the despatches of the Venetian ambassador who was present at the ceremony.

subsidies for which the Queen asked, and the concessions that might be obtained from her in exchange. It was evident that a numerous party, especially in the Lower Chamber, in which the minor nobility sat, was resolved to take advantage of the public misfortunes to enforce the restoration by the sovereign of all those rights which had been taken away from the old national liberties in the days of prosperity. A table of the franchises to be demanded was drawn up, and adopted after some debate by the Upper Chamber, and so great was their number, so important was their bearing, that Hungary, constituted according to them, would have become an entirely independent and almost republican nation. The executive power to belong permanently to the chief, (the Palatine) himself elected on the presentation of the Diet, the administration to be exclusively entrusted to Hungarian functionaries, all ecclesiastical dignities and benefices to be reserved to the national clergy, a "Chamber of Justice" pronouncing its sentences without appeal to any superior jurisdiction, a special system of taxes and customs, receipts proceeding from them to be appropriated to legal expenses; these and other provisions, conceived in the same spirit, left no more than a nominal supremacy to the central power residing at Vienna. When the Queen was made acquainted with these imperious demands, she was both angry and grieved, and she said very plainly that what chiefly wounded her

was not so much the attack upon her authority, as the distrust which was manifested towards her, and the advantage taken of her unhappy position. She was, however, strongly advised by her followers to restrain her feelings, and she replied to the address of the States by a message in which certain of the proposals were accepted, and others were so modified as to render them endurable.[3]

This moderation on the part of the Queen did not produce the effect which she had been led to expect. The reading of the message to the two assembled Chambers by the Palatine-prothonotary was interrupted by ironical shouts, and followed by actual tumult. Angry men, rising at all points of the hall, declared that they had better go away since nothing was to be obtained; that it was useless to call people together to mock them; that the Queen might do the best she could with her German Councillors, since it was quite clear, that, like her father and her grandfather before her, she had no confidence except in them. For several days the repeated sittings of the Diet presented a spectacle of utter confusion, and outside, the old spirit of insubordination seemed to be aroused once more. Pamphlets, satirical verses, and caricatures circulated in the city. At first these productions were directed against the ministers only, but very soon the royal person figured in them. The popular talk in public places assumed a

[3] D'Arneth, vol. i. p. 289.

menacing tone ; a few days more of such a state of things, and it would no longer be safe for Maria Theresa to remain at Presburg.

It was early in September, in the midst of this gathering trouble, that disastrous news arrived, first from the capital, and then from every part of Europe. The armies of three enemies were on the march, Austria was invaded, Vienna was threatened, Sweden was in arms, England had fallen away. The storm was raging round the unhappy Queen on all sides, while the ground was sinking beneath her feet. At times her health seemed to give way. Her first-born child, the little Archduke Joseph, was only six months old, but she was again expecting the trial of maternity, and, bursting into tears, she exclaimed, " I know not whether there will remain a place on the earth for me, where I may give birth to my child ! " Then, summoning up her courage, she rose, and said with great dignity, " I am only a poor queen, but I have the heart of a king ! "

Then there came to Maria Theresa one of those sudden flashes of light which sometimes illumine a great soul. With the clear perception that frequently belongs to women, she had discerned that her unruly subjects felt most keenly a grievance about which they said least ; this was the distrust which prevented their being allowed to take arms, and to have their contingent admitted into the imperial troops with their own organization and

under their national chiefs. The German ministers incessantly urged considerations of prudence on this point, and the example of turbulence which they now had under their eyes seemed to justify their counsel. The Queen, on the contrary, perceived that she might turn this national sensitiveness to great advantage, and recover the alienated affection of the population by a frank act of confidence which would be justified by her great misfortunes.

Provision had been made by the ancient laws for cases in which, the country being in extreme danger, every man capable of carrying arms might rise in its defence. This *levée-en-masse* bore the name of "insurrection," according to the exact meaning of the Latin word, which has been considerably perverted by modern usage. At the risk of striking terror into her Councillors, the Queen resolved to try this last resource. She began by imparting her design to a few chosen confidants assembled in secret. All the Germans opposed it with affright, and for that very reason the Hungarians accepted it with enthusiasm. It was, however, the opinion of the latter, that the Queen ought to retire with the heir to the throne into the fortified town of Raab, which was at a considerable distance from the frontier, and where she and her son would be in safety under the ægis of popular affection. The Queen accepted their promises of co-operation, but postponed action on their advice. She was not disposed

to go and bury herself in the citadel, neither perhaps did she carry her confidence in her advisers quite to that point.[4]

The next day, the Palatine, who was in the secret, gave a great banquet to the members of the two assemblies. Their number, although it was considerable, was far from being complete, for the most mutinous, or the most indifferent, had taken their departure after the reading of the royal message that had been so badly received, either in a fit of the sulks, or perhaps to prepare for resistance; only those who were firm partisans of royalty, and were reluctant to enter into a contest with it, remaining. When the rumour of the Queen's wish and the opposition of the German Councillors spread among the guests, it was received with a transport of joy and hope. "Let her follow the dictates of her own heart," they cried; "it will advise her better than her ministers."

On the 11th September, the two Chambers were directed to repair, headed by their president, to the great hall of the palace, at eleven o'clock a.m. All the members obeyed the summons, or rather, they rushed in, in a state of excitement and expectation. When the assembly was complete, the Queen entered, passed slowly through the ranks of the deputies, and majestically ascended the steps of the throne. She was dressed in black, with no orna-

[4] D'Arneth, pp. 297, 404.

ments except the crown on her head and the sword at her side; her features bore the impress of grief, but of grief which was stern and unyielding. She called on the Chancellor to speak first, and he described the distressful condition of the monarchy in a few words; then she rose and addressed her hearers in Latin, in a loud and clear voice.

"The misfortune of our situation," said she, "renders it a duty to inform our faithful States of the illustrious kingdom of Hungary, of the invasions in arms of our hereditary province of Austria, and of the danger which threatens the kingdom itself, and also to propose the means of remedying these ills. The existence of those two kingdoms, that of our own person, our children, and our crown is at stake. Forsaken by all, we have no resource but the fidelity of these illustrious States and the ever-renowned valour of the Hungarians. We earnestly entreat the different orders of these faithful States not to lose a moment in decreeing and putting into execution such measures as are rendered necessary by this extreme danger to our person, our children, this kingdom, and our crown. As for what depends upon us, our faithful States may rest assured that our royal affection will be careful to do all that may secure the maintenance, integrity, felicity, and honour of this kingdom."[5]

[5] This harangue, so different from the words which Voltaire has put into the mouth of Maria Theresa, has been reproduced

Twice, during this brief allocution, the voice of the Queen had faltered on pronouncing the name of her children. As she reseated herself, she passed her hand over her eyes to conceal her tears, but when the Primate spoke in his turn, assuring her of the absolute devotion of the States, she raised her head to listen, "with," says a contemporary narrative, "the air of oppressed innocence." The emotion then became general, but it was expressed by less boisterous manifestations than those of the festival day. A unanimous chorus of grave voices repeated after the prelate, the loyal protestation :— "Vitam et sanguinem consecramus." Then the deputies retired to deliberate at once upon the proposals of the Queen. They had hardly left her presence, and they were still upon the steps of the palace, when the levity of that mobile race resumed its sway; while their eyes were still wet with tears, they were laughing at the German ministers, and mocking their discomfited and frightened demeanour during the preceding scene. It was said that one of the Germans had muttered to his neighbour, at the most touching moment of the demonstration,

after the Latin text preserved in the archives of Hungary. The last phrase is thus couched:—"Quantam ex parte nostra est, quæcumque pro pristina regni hujus felicitate et gentis decore forent, in iis omnibus benignitatem et clementiam nostram regiam fideles status et ordines regni experturi sunt." These expressions, which are very difficult to translate, evidently related in a vague way to the re-establishment of the contested privileges.

"It would be better to trust the devil than these folk," and as the individual to whom this expression was imputed passed by at the moment, he had a narrow escape of ill-treatment by the crowd.

"Insurrection" was so strongly implanted in the instincts of the country, that the resolution to have recourse to it, met with no opposition. A levy of thirty thousand infantry, divided into thirteen regiments was voted on the spot, and in addition, each of the nobles bound himself either to serve in the cavalry or to find a substitute. With recruits from Croatia, Transylvania, the Banat of Temeswar, and other dependencies, it was hoped that a hundred thousand men might be raised. All these resolutions were adopted with so much ease and eagerness, there was such joy in the possession of a sovereign who was not swayed by the prejudices of Vienna, that the confidants of Maria Theresa regarded the moment as a propitious one in which to anticipate her secret wishes. They knew of an act of homage which would go more direct to her heart than all the praises that could be lavished upon her, and even all the offers of assistance she might receive, and they discreetly insinuated among the benches of the States, that since the Queen showed her preference for Hungary, they ought not to check that feeling by neglecting to secure to her husband the rank which was already his in the other States of the monarchy. How strange is the mobility of

great assemblies of men! The idea which all would have repelled the day before, suddenly presented itself as an admirable means of proving to the Queen, that although she could do nothing by the intervention of a Viennese cabinet, everything would be granted to her and hers. The co-regency of the Grand Duke, proposed by the Primate himself, was accepted almost without opposition, and the Diet was convoked a second time at the palace to receive his oath.

It might have been feared that this fresh royal sitting would present a somewhat disadvantageous contrast to the first. The constrained and haughty manners of the Grand Duke were by no means attractive, and the tardy homage he now received was not personally flattering; but love has marvellous instincts. Hardly had her husband taken the oath, when, at a sign from the Queen, their son, the little Archduke, was brought into the hall in the arms of his nurse, and his mother, taking him into her own, presented him to the Assembly with a gesture which seemed to say that she placed all the objects of her affection and all the hope of her race, in the faithful keeping of her subjects. "The child," says our Hungarian chronicler, "showed a precocious vivacity in his movements which made him resemble a little squirrel." All who were present, pleased by the infant's liveliness, and touched by the maternal confidence of the Queen, applauded,

and the meeting broke up amid the greatest enthusiasm.

Only one matter now remained to be settled; it was, however, of the greatest importance—the ever-pending question of the re-establishment of the ancient privileges. So soon as everything concerning the "insurrection" had been regulated, the discussion upon the answer to be made to the Queen's message was resumed, and fresh concessions which were to be exacted from her were enumerated; but although the debate was kept up with liveliness and even warmth, by a number of speakers, it speedily became evident that the general ardour was cooled, and that distracted attention was wandering elsewhere. Warlike ideas had taken possession of every mind, each man was in a hurry to return home, that he might see to the equipment of his company. One unlucky member, who proposed that the arming of the nation should be postponed until the royal opposition to their will had been overcome, was treated with general indignation. The Queen on her side, being satisfied that no attempt would be made to coerce her, graciously accorded very considerable concessions, and a compromise, drawn up in seventy articles, was agreed to, by which the rights of the States were extended, without absolutely disarming the Crown, and this compromise has remained, for more than a century, the Charter of the Hungarian monarchy.

If the wise princess thought that the yielding of certain of her prerogatives was compensated by the moral ascendency she had won, she was right, and she exercised just prevision for her posterity throughout a long future. Thanks to this concession, as politic as it was generous, respect for the dynasty still remains united in the heart of the Hungarian race with passionate love of public liberties, and these two sentiments are associated with the same remembrance and the same date. In our own time a descendant of Maria Theresa, having been so ill-advised as to make an attempt against the independence of Hungary, has been speedily constrained to re-establish it. If that impotent attempt did not shake his royal authority to its very foundation, it is because the noble image of his ancestress is always present in that free country, and holds sway over the imagination of the people.

The debates of the Diet, which closed on the 7th of October, had lasted three months. Voltaire has summed up the proceedings in half a page in his *Précis du Siècle de Louis Quinze*, and his clear and incisive narrative has circulated from hand to hand, and been reproduced verbatim by all the chroniclers who have succeeded him. I venture to ask those who have had the patience to follow me hitherto, to compare this famous passage with the exact truth which I have now placed before their eyes. If they are curious to penetrate into the secrets of art, they will like to trace the skilful

process by which the great writer selected from a long series of salient incidents those which place situations and characters in the broadest light, and grouped them so as to form a unique and striking scene.

Voltaire has thrown the three days of the Coronation, the *levée en masse*, and the oath of the co-regency, into one only, whose magical result appears to be due to a sudden inspiration of Maria Theresa. He has proceeded absolutely as if he were a painter who has to express the whole of a great subject upon one single canvas, or as if he had been arranging a classic tragedy for the stage, and was bound by the unities of time and place. I may be wrong, but while I render due homage to this artistic feat, I think there is almost as much charm in the pure, unadorned, and uncoloured truth. Perhaps if Voltaire had not been restricted to the narrow dimensions of a *précis* of general history, he would himself have felt the advantage of adhering more closely to the exact facts. In any case, I imagine that others (whose names need not fear comparison, and who gave the amplest scope to their genius) Shakespere or Schiller, for example, or simply Walter Scott and Augustin Thierry, would have described that memorable spectacle in another fashion. They would not have been afraid of lessening the impression by making room for the characteristic details which Voltaire has left unrecorded, or held that the royal majesty of

Maria Theresa was lessened by her touching tenderness for a husband who was so far inferior to herself. They would have refrained from substituting a single phrase, perhaps pathetic, but slightly declamatory, for the Latin text of her speech, which betrays an emotion all the more poignant because it breaks through the bonds of the official language. They would not have refused to pausē a moment at the amusing rivalry of the German Councillors and the Hungarian deputies. It would have been a pleasant task to them to study the conflict of feelings which agitate even heroic hearts, and the hidden and complex springs by which even a *coup de théâtre* is effected. In short, they would not have disdained any of those contrasts which make history a living picture, full of colour; and make virtue and genius, when they appear in its pages, beings of flesh and blood, not statues nobly posed. In a word, however perfect human art may be in point of variety, brilliancy, and grandeur, reality, which is the work of God, is superior te it.

III.

The armed rising of Hungary in favour of Maria Theresa produced a considerable impression in Europe. Many of those who had seen the courageous Queen set out for a country which was still regarded as semi-barbarous, were convinced that she could not escape the perils she was about to brave.

Great was the general astonishment when it became known that she was about to return at the head of a warlike multitude, who had risen at her call from the soil. The old hereditary provinces of Austria, whose loyalty had begun to give way before adversity, were sharply rebuked by the example of the classic land of revolt and insubordination. The countries that were afraid of being made the scene of strife, took alarm at the approach of a multitude which was more like an invasion than an army. In France, the public imagination, which had at first been excited by the hope of conquering Germany, underwent a reaction, and in many young heads, and especially in many female hearts, symyathy for the illustrious victim took the place which had hitherto been filled by visions of victory. In England the effect was still greater; admiration rose to enthusiasm. Subscriptions were immediately opened to purchase arms for the faithful adherents of Maria Theresa, and the old Duchess of Marlborough, formerly the famous friend of Queen Anne, came out of her retreat at over eighty years of age, and wrote herself down first on the list for 40,000*l.* sterling.

D'Arneth tells us, however, that the effect of this demonstration was rather moral than material, and that, in the long-run, the general rising turned out like most manifestations of the same kind, which produce more noise than action, and expend more ink and words than they put men in the field. But

hope, mere hope, is in itself a force, and to have restored hope on behalf of a cause which seemed to be lost, was no trifling result, even had there been no other.

This reaction was partly brought about by the gradual diminution of the confidence that had been inspired by the first exploits of the allies, as the activity which had characterized their earlier proceedings slackened. Mutual distrust, the bane of coalitions, crept into their ranks, and as a natural result, hesitation and uncertainty into their resolutions. The French were the first to murmur, and not without cause, at the bad condition in which they found the Bavarian troops, the insufficiency of their preparations, and the defects of their equipment. They complained loudly that so long as they were on neutral territory, where they provided for their necessities themselves, they had wanted for nothing, but that no sooner had they reached the dominions of the sovereign whose auxiliaries they were, than they had to endure every kind of privation. Again, the results of the equivocal and provisional arrangements made by Belle-Isle turned out to be even more unfortunate than had been anticipated. Belle-Isle, when he left the supreme command of the united forces to the Elector, had taken it for granted that his own ascendency would suffice to render the Prince's command purely nominal, and this calculation would probably have

been fulfilled, if he had arrived in time to take part in the first military operations, as he hoped to do; but the French troops being commanded in the interval by a mere general officer, who had not even a definite title, the Elector's authority, which ought to have been only an appearance, became a reality. This was an error all the more to be regretted, because the Elector, feeling himself unfit for command, delegated all his powers to his favourite minister, Marshal Torring, who was as incapable as himself, but much more presumptuous.

Belle-Isle, who was not to join the army until after the election of the Emperor, was detained, much against his will, from day to day, and indefinitely, for the Archbishop of Mayence, on whom the convocation of the Diet depended, invented one pretext after another, and contrived delay upon delay, so as to leave events to work themselves out, and fortune to pronounce between the competitors.

Irritated by this detention, and distracted between two equally imperative, and yet conflicting duties, Belle-Isle endeavoured to make up for his personal inaction by maintaining a constant and voluminous correspondence, now with the lieutenants, and again with the Elector and his minister. But, unfortunately, the imperious tone of his letters complicated those difficulties which they were intended to surmount, and embittered the relations between

the two armies, which it was so important to ameliorate.[6]

The immediate consequence of the failure in the command was the unexpected abandonment of the direct march upon Vienna, for which everybody, both inside and outside the capital, was prepared. On this subject Voltaire has wisely said, "What the enemy fears ought always to be done." The terror that prevailed among the Viennese was a sure indication that the decisive blow should have been struck there, at the very heart of the enemy. Frederick, whose perception was rarely at fault, and who never let fortune slip, represented over and over again, either by pressing letters, or through Marshal von Schmettau, his envoy to the Elector, that this opportunity should be used, but his advice was disregarded.

During the whole of September, the allied armies remained inactive before Linz, and when, at last, they were put in motion at the beginning of October, it was to march to the conquest of Bohemia and the siege of Prague, leaving Vienna on their right. Frederick, who regarded this as even a graver political than military error, and was incensed by it, afterwards imputed the change of purpose to

[6] The Marquis de Beauvau, September 16, October 15, 1741. Belle-Isle to Beauvau, October 10. (*Correspondance de Bavière.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (*Correspondances du Ministère de la Guerre, passim.*)

mean jealousy on the part of Cardinal Fleury, who, according to the King's theory, was afraid the Elector might secure a brilliant triumph by making himself master of the capital of Austria. It has even been alleged that the Marquis de Beauvau, the French envoy to Munich, had actually to acknowledge the influence of this shabby consideration in the presence of the Prussian minister. But I have had the private correspondence of the Marquis de Beauvau with Belle-Isle and with the minister in my hands, and I have found nothing of the sort in it, not even in the form of an insinuation. The Marquis, who accompanied the Elector to the camp, constantly laments his unfitness for the supreme post to which he aspired.[7]

The correspondence of the Prussian envoy is, no doubt, equally silent on the subject, otherwise Droysen, to whom all the documents appear to have been communicated, would not have failed to confirm an accusation, which, like every other Prussian calumny, has been implicitly credited, especially by French historians, and was repeated by Voltaire.

The real reasons that induced the allies to form so unfortunate a resolution, are almost as bad, but they are less Machiavellian. In the first place the

[7] In this correspondence it appears that the Marquis de Beauvau had always advocated the march on Vienna, and that Belle-Isle advised against it. (*Correspondance de Bavière*, October 11, *passim.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs. See Appendix A., vol. ii.

rumour was in circulation that the Queen of Hungary was recalling all the troops which she maintained beyond the Alps, and bringing them back to Vienna by way of Bavaria, thereby abandoning her Italian possessions, and the Elector was alarmed at the idea that he was about to be taken in flank while an army was marched through his States. The Electress, terrified at being left alone at Munich, entreated that the troops might not be taken to such a distance as to deprive her of protection. Before this rather ridiculous panic had subsided, the autumn was advanced, the days were drawing in, and the fortifications of Vienna had been put into a state of defence.

At this stage, Belle-Isle urged that an enterprise whose failure would have been fatal to the common cause should not be attempted. Perhaps, after his recent experience of the Elector's timidity, he did not care to entrust him with the conduct of an operation which especially required courage and decision. If any other motive mingled with his doubts of the Elector, it could only have been that which I shall now explain, and which was afterwards so fully justified. If the entire action of the campaign were directed against Vienna, Silesia would, by that fact alone, be left in Frederick's hands, for it was certain that Marshal Neipperg, who was still defending the southern portion of Silesia and some fortified places, would immediately fall

back with his troops, and march to the protection of the capital. Was it quite certain that he would be very closely pursued by the Prussian army? Would Frederick, when master of the prize that he had adjudged to himself, display any great ardour in coming to the aid of his allies? Was it not prudent, in order to secure combined action with him, to join him in the north where he needed support, rather than to wait for him in the south when he should have nothing more to fear? This is the question which I read between the lines in a remark made more than once by the Marshal: "We must bear in mind that all the King of Prussia wants is already done, while all we want is yet to do." To these causes of disagreement, which hampered the conduct of the military operations, were added others arising from the anticipated division of the spoils of the common enemy—and these were still more grave. No difficulty was made on the part of France, for she urged no personal pretensions, but it was a very different case between Bavaria, who claimed the inheritance of the whole of the Austrian patrimony, and Prussia, who wanted a share in it. For the present, it is true, Silesia was enough for Frederick, but he made it a condition that some strips of territory and several fortified places, which he considered necessary to secure the defence of his new possession, should be added. This was a point which could only be settled by a treaty to be dis-

cussed between the two pretenders, and must give rise to more than one contest.

Again, it might have been easy enough to come to an understanding with the Elector of Bavaria, for the good prince was of an easy temper, and not very far-seeing; he defended his interests but feebly, and readily allowed himself to be coaxed by Frederick. Belle-Isle was occasionally made impatient by the Elector's credulity. "The King of Prussia," he wrote, one day, when he was in a bad humour, "writes letters full of friendship and promises to the Elector daily, nor is he sparing of cajolery, for, according to the expressions in his letters, the Elector may dispose of the King of Prussia, his treasury, and his person. For all that he does not lend him a crown, and wants to take the citadel of Glatz from him." [8]

But the difficulty was still greater when a third party intervened. Saxony, roused by the exhortations of Maurice and the turn that events had taken, had decided at last upon entering into the coalition. The co-operation of the Saxon army, 20,000 strong, was very valuable, especially in the meditated aggression on Bohemia, but this support had to be paid for at its full value, and France and Bavaria resolved to discharge the debt generously by ceding the whole of Moravia to Augustus III. beforehand.

[8] Belle-Isle to Amelot, September 26, 1741. (*Correspondance de l'Ambassade à la Diète.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Frederick, however, was less liberal; hence arose fresh dissensions, which were aggravated by the hasty temper and the fraternal affection of Maurice, to whom King Augustus entrusted the defence of his interests.[9]

I do not know whether it was the knowledge of these dissensions among her enemies, and the hope of profiting by them, that now induced Maria Theresa to swerve from her proud determination on the point which she had most at heart; but she had hardly got out of her difficulties with her Hungarian subjects, and she had not yet resumed hostilities by their aid, when, as if she had graduated in diplomacy in the school of Frederick, we find her entering upon two separate negotiations. Both of these could not succeed, for they tended to contradictory results, and were evidently designed to produce discord among the allies. At the same time, almost on the same day, overtures on her part were made to Fleury, and to Frederick. To Fleury she offered the cession of Luxembourg to France, and she showed herself disposed to cede such portions of the Milanese or the Netherlands, as might be agreed upon, either to the Elector of Bavaria or to Spain, on condition of the renunciation by the Elector of his candidature to the Empire, and all claim to

[9] Marshal Belle-Isle to Amelot, from the 6th to the 18th September, and in October, 1741, *passim*. Maurice de Saxe to Belle-Isle, September 15, 1741. (*Correspondance de l'Ambassade à la Diète.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

the Austrian possessions in Germany. To Frederick (and this must have hurt her pride sorely) she promised the ratification of all the concessions demanded in the ultimatum which had been brought back from Strehlen by Sir Thomas Robinson. It is true that she appended the express and almost unacceptable condition that the King should pledge his electoral vote to the Grand Duke in exchange, and at need, hold a corps of 10,000 men at his disposal, to help him in his difficulties. These two proposals had, at least, one point in common, one identical aim, although pursued by opposite means; this was the elevation of the Grand Duke to the Empire, a political interest, and also one of the heart, which evidently took precedence of every other in the mind of the Queen. We cannot but ask ourselves, what would she have done if she had received an affirmative answer to both proposals? This was a dilemma from which, on Fleury's part at least, she was speedily released, for his refusal, even to discuss the question, was prompt and categorical. She had also written a touching letter to Fleury with her own hand, intreating him, in the name of humanity and the Gospel, to spare the blood of her subjects, "for," said she (with a happy allusion to the fidelity of the Hungarians), "although a woman, I do not lack courage, and if this last attempt do not succeed, it will be necessary to go to very *cruel* extremities, and I have many subjects who will sustain my rights,

and rather than see me abased, will risk all, even perish." At the same time, she promised the Cardinal, if he would consent to accept her overtures, that secrecy should be strictly observed, and in order that he might feel more secure on that point, she had her letter conveyed to him directly, through the French Chargé-d'affaires at Vienna, without the knowledge of her ministers, "whom," as she added, "she had reason to mistrust, for most of them were more English than Robinson himself." The letter and the answer were to be entrusted to an obscure person who would run no risk of recognition.[1]

Belle-Isle, at Frankfort, was approached with similar precautions by two little-known agents, Wied and Koch, one of whom had formerly been employed by the Queen's father during the preceding war, in the negotiations of the treaty of 1735. They requested the Marshal to receive them at night, at some appointed place other than the embassy.[2]

The absolutely similar reception by Fleury and Belle-Isle of these discreet proposals is a curious incident; minister and ambassador both appear to have been uneasy, almost alarmed, at the proceeding itself, and the mystery which surrounded it. Each was moved by an identical impulse, first to endeavour

[1] Maria Theresa to Fleury. Vincent to Amelot, September 27, 1741. (*Correspondance de Vienne.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

[2] Belle-Isle to Amelot, Frankfort, October 7, 1741. (*Correspondance de l'Ambassade à la Diète.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

to shut the mouth of his interlocutor, then, if he could not entirely succeed in that, to close his own ears, and lastly, if he were compelled to take cognizance of Maria Theresa's proposal, to give Frederick prompt and public notice of it, so that no indiscretion, whether intentional or not, might forestall his communication. They were both, and above all things, afraid of being entrapped into anything that might furnish a pretext for the rupture of a friendship which was so costly and so brittle.

Fleury allowed fifteen days to elapse before he acknowledged the receipt of Maria Theresa's letter, just the time necessary for Valori, who was apprised of the facts, to communicate them to Frederick; and when, at length, he replies, his tone is entirely changed. No more paternal kindness, no more "unction" or "elegance;" the epistle is as dry as if he feared, or indeed as if he wished, that it might be intercepted. "We are no longer free, we can no longer enter into any negotiations except in concert with our allies." Belle-Isle also kept Koch, the envoy, waiting several days before he received him, and at the first interview said, without giving him time to finish his communication, "Are you aware of the treaty of alliance which exists between the King (Louis XV.), the King of Prussia, and the Elector of Bavaria?" And as the other looked at him with some embarrassment, "I beg to inform you," he added, "that the King is in alliance with that

sovereign, and with the Elector of Bavaria, and that everything which you propose to one or the other of those princes is communicated upon the spot. Rest assured that these sovereigns will not again separate, and that the Queen will have to satisfy them, or to resolve to carry on a war which she will be unable to sustain. I do not know that the Queen of Hungary has any human succour, or any resource in Europe; there is none but that of Heaven for her to expect, and there is room to believe rather that she is abandoned by Heaven, since she experiences the effect of its wrath in the strange blindness with which her ministers are stricken." [3]

Valori was instructed to transmit the text of these frank and haughty replies to the King of Prussia, and in return he was enabled to affirm, proofs in hand, that the King had refused the offers of Maria Theresa with equal sincerity, indeed, according to his custom, after a somewhat rough fashion.

In the first place, the former overtures being again brought to his camp by the indefatigable Sir Thomas Robinson, Frederick declared that he would not even see him. "Send away that jackanapes of an Englishman," he wrote to Podewils, "let him have for his only answer that I thought he was mocking me, that he knew what I said to him when he was going away, that I would not even speak to him, and

[3] Belle-Isle to Amelot, Frankfort, October 7, 1741. (*Correspondance de l'Ambassade à la Diète.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

that I had forbidden you to negotiate with him. Tell him all this with an offended air, and let him be off out of Breslau in twenty-four hours." Returning to the charge the next day, he said, "Get me rid of this rogue of a negotiator, whom I cannot endure; it would be infamous of me to enter into a negotiation with Austria and England. Pack off this fellow; be sure if he stays for more than twenty-four hours at Breslau, I shall have a fit of apoplexy. Send me a courier when you have got rid of him, that I may know he is off. His —— of a Queen of Hungary, and his fool of a King of England may just be dupes, the one of her pride and the other of his folly. . . . If he asks you for another audience, refuse him flatly." In a little note, in German, at the end of this letter, Podewils was instructed to communicate it to Valori so that it might be laid before the Cardinal.[4]

Sir Thomas Robinson, being dismissed in this way, could not reappear. Lord Hyndford, the official agent of the King of England, with whom Frederick was not at war, and whom he could not treat so cavalierly, still remained. His communications or his visits had to be endured, but the King contrived to leave no doubt on Valori's mind respecting the nature of their reception. On the 4th September, Valori writes to Belle-Isle, from the camp at Neundorf, whither he had followed Frederick: "I

[4] "Pol. Corr." vol. i. p. 319—320.

must give you an account, Monseigneur, of a circumstance which equally reveals the candour of the King, and the prodigious alarm of the Court of Vienna. This morning, just as the King of Prussia was reviewing his troops, a message from Lord Hyndford arrived. I had the honour to be present, and after he had read the communication and the document which it contained, he called me and said aloud, 'Read that, M. de Valori; I think these people are going mad.' It was the draft of a proposed treaty (if indeed it could be called a draft, for it was so couched that nothing but the signature was wanting) by which the Queen of Hungary would cede the whole of Lower Silesia, the town of Breslau included, Neisse being the boundary. On account of this concession, his Prussian Majesty is required to give his electoral vote to the Grand Duke, to enter into an agreement with the Electors of Saxony and Hanover, in favour of the Court of Vienna, to add 10,000 men to the forces of Marshal Neipperg, and to undertake, to the utmost of his power, to procure indemnification at the expense of the enemies of that Court; in short, to defend the Pragmatic Sanction. Lord Hyndford's letter, accompanying the document, states that he has full powers to conclude the treaty, and that he has a letter from the Grand Duke for his Majesty, which he is to present or not, according to his Majesty's pleasure. The King of Prussia told me that he was

curious to see this letter, that he would send for it, and reply to it civilly, but, he added, I will let him see how much surprised I am, and I will leave him no doubt but that he will have to give satisfaction to France and Bavaria. I suppress all the reflections and jokes which the King *made* to me, but I must not suppress the reflections which *ought to be made* on this proceeding on his part. He is acting with all the straightforwardness that can be desired with respect to what he has promised. He said to me that their returning to the charge so often proved they must entertain a very poor opinion either of his sincerity or of his policy. 'Either they think me a rogue,' said he, 'or the stupidest of men.' A few days afterwards, before he gave the indispensable audience to Lord Hyndford, he also said, 'I really cannot understand the obstinacy of the King of England. I thought I had explained myself clearly enough to be delivered from these importunities.' And then he added, a moment afterwards, 'Is the King of France *really* so disinterested? Does he *really* not want to get any advantage out of the war which he is supporting? Are we to do nothing for him?'"[5]

As the English minister still appeared to intend to remain at the camp after he had had his audience, Frederick took care to send a superior officer

[5] Valori to Belle-Isle, August 30, September 14 to 22, 1741. (*Correspondance de Prusse.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

of his staff to Valori, to reassure him on that point.

"Colonel Goltz," writes Valori on the 23rd of September (it is well to remember the name, we shall see why presently), "has just left me, having come to tell me that he had the King's commands to advise Lord Hyndford not any longer to defer his departure from the army. If Lord Hyndford does not yield to this friendly hint and counsel, Colonel Goltz is to tell him, that, as he has received a positive and unalterable reply from the King, his longer sojourn in the camp would not be agreeable to his Majesty, since it could only produce the effect of giving umbrage to his allies. This the King is anxious to avoid, so that he will start to-day for Breslau. You may perceive how careful the King of Prussia is to give us proofs of his sincerity; I must do him the justice to say that he never misses the least opportunity of doing so." [6]

Belle-Isle, who was affected to tears at this attention, expressed his gratitude to Frederick in the following terms: "No one can be more touched than I am, by the solicitude with which your Majesty has deigned to inform me of the fruitless negotiation of the English; this is an example of the grace that accompanies all the actions, and

[6] Valori to Belle-Isle, September 23, 1741. (*Correspondance de Prusse.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

is united with the other eminent qualities for which your Majesty is distinguished." [7]

These tender effusions were not to last more than three days this time. The couriers who carried Valori's confident letters, had not yet had time to reach their destination ere the horizon was darkened, and the aspect of the sky was changed. Without pretext, without preparation, the King suddenly began to make angry complaints about everything, and a deluge of recrimination and fault-finding came down on the head of the unhappy ambassador. The most surprising thing about this unexpected breeze was that not one of these improvized grievances was new; and they all had been taken easily enough the day before. The only two real mistakes that the Elector had made up to that moment in the command of his troops, had been criticized with justice and moderation; now, although nothing had occurred to increase their gravity, Frederick suddenly began to speak of them with extreme anger. The Elector, whom he had until now praised and flattered to excess, was "an ass," the French and Bavarian generals were little better; to the Saxons he applied an epithet too coarse for repetition, and, in fact, unless Belle-Isle came at once to take the command, it would be impossible to go on with the war on the present

[7] Belle-Isle to Frederick, October 2, 1741. (*Correspondance de Prusse.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

footing. Then certain points in the treaty of partition, which were supposed to be settled, were suddenly and imperiously called in question. The fortified town of Glatz, for example, situated on the frontiers of Silesia and Bohemia, and claimed, in the first instance, by Prussia, had, after some discussion, been ceded with a good grace to the Elector, who still continued to express his thanks in every letter. All of a sudden, Frederick discovered anew that the possession of Glatz was indispensable to the security of Silesia, and insisted that it should be at once given up again, on the spot, otherwise there would be an end of everything, and nothing more to be said. After this, it was the presence of an Austrian agent at Breslau (a piece of diplomatic courtesy which had been agreed to beforehand between the allies, in proof of the absence of personal interest in the internal conflicts of Germany on the part of France), that aroused his injurious suspicions. Why should the Cardinal care to keep up a means of surreptitious communication with the Queen of Hungary? And then, not knowing what else to invent, Frederick fell foul of the treaty of neutrality that had been signed with Hanover: it had been arranged too quickly and without his participation; if he had known of it in time, he would have demanded advantages for himself, but France had thought only of her own. As the climax of this series of ridiculous pretexts and incoherent rhodo-

montade, he declared that he was going to lay siege to Neisse, the last important place which remained for him to conquer in Silesia, after which his troops, who had been a year on active service, and stood in need of rest, should go into winter quarters, and not stir until spring. It was no fault of his that the opportunity of terminating the war at one blow had been lost by neglecting to march on Vienna; he was not going to spend his time in doing the business and repairing the errors of others.[8]

Valori at first attempted to meet this change of humour, and these unexpected exactions, by redoubled graciousness and compliance. After a great deal of persuasion, he succeeded in inducing the French Ministry and the Elector to consent to the revocation of the cession of Glatz, and to allow that town, if Frederick positively required it, to be again included among the future possessions of Prussia. The day he received the authorization to consent to this cession (but while it was still under formal discussion), he let the ministerial note that contained his final instructions slip from his hand, and it fell on the floor. Frederick himself records that he instantly put his foot upon the paper, as if by accident, so as to prevent the ambassador from picking it up, and

[8] Valori to Amelot and to Belle-Isle, October 7, 9, 17, and 30, 1741. (*Correspondance de Prusse.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Droysen enters into all these grievances, and appears to attach serious meaning to them.

thus secured the opportunity of reading it after the audience; but he does not add that Valori perceived the manœuvre, and that when he haughtily asked the envoy on the following day, "Well, when do you put the city of Glatz into my hands again?" he replied, "I thought, Sire, I laid it at your feet yesterday." Frederick smiled, and for that day was mollified. He began again on the next, however, with new pretexts for fresh fits of anger. Valori had learned only too thoroughly, at the expense of his own peace, what sort of disposition he had to deal with, and he never took this violence of temper seriously, but always endeavoured to discover what trick or calculation the assumed passion was meant to hide.

That these imaginary grievances were intended to prepare the way for a rupture, and to justify a breach of faith, was an idea that presented itself naturally, and though it must have been painful to Valori to appear to contradict himself, to say that black was white, and white black, with only fifteen days between the two statements, he wrote to Belle-Isle on the 7th of October, and told him how matters stood. "Do you not think," said he, "that the change of the King of Prussia's mind and purpose respecting the cession of Glatz is the beginning of what is called a German quarrel (*une querelle d'Allemand*)? I confess that I am not easy on this point." He had still greater cause for disquiet when he was informed that Lord Hyndford had only left

the camp for a place at a few leagues' distance, where he remained, pleading illness. Either Colonel Goltz had not conveyed the advice which he was directed to give with sufficient precision, or Lord Hyndford did not choose to follow it: he remained in the neighbourhood of Neisse at an equal distance from the Prussian and Austrian camps, and communicated freely with both, in virtue of his diplomatic character. Valori, who really knew something about the art of military engineering, and who was fond of holding forth upon the subject, could not avoid remarking that the siege of Neisse, which Frederick began at once, presented curious features; neither besiegers nor besieged seemed to be in earnest; the first appeared to attack for the sake of form, the second to defend themselves for that of propriety; besides, Marshal Neipperg's army, which was encamped in the vicinity, did not seem to trouble itself about succouring the beleaguered town. These were very suspicious appearances, and Valori was forced to ask himself, while he shrank from so odious a conjecture, whether he was not being duped by a farce.[9]

Frederick, who read the inward workings of the envoy's mind in his countenance, seemed to be bent upon restoring him to ease of mind and

[9] Valori to Belle-Isle, October 14, 1741. (*Correspondance de Prusse.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs. *Memoires de Valori*, vol. i. p. 128.

confidence. One evening at supper, when he had placed Valori by his side as usual, a letter was brought by a trumpeter; the King read it, and passed it on immediately to Valori without comment. It was a fresh missive from Lord Hyndford who seemed this time to be really disheartened, and took a final leave. "I am much distressed," he said, "to see that the inflexibility of the two States increases rather than diminishes. Nothing remains to me except the knowledge of having done my duty, and as my health is but slightly improved, I return to-day to Breslau, where I shall await your Majesty's commands."

In the face of this categorical denial of any cause of alarm, Valori must have felt privately ashamed of his rash judgment, but as the suspicious indications reappeared on the next day, he was entirely at fault, not knowing what to believe, or what to write to his chiefs, and he confessed to Belle-Isle, with dismay, that his head was almost splitting with the confusion of contradictory ideas. "The farther I advance, in the present state of things," he wrote, "the more I am convinced of my own insufficiency. I feel how little fit I a to patch up all these breaches of promise and variations of every kind, which fill my head with suspicions that I would rather not entertain, and am still more unwilling to pass on to you. No doubt you will think that my letters are very contra-

dictory, and that each is a recantation of the preceding, but what else can they be amid such variations?"[1]

In addition to his trouble of mind, Valori was suffering at this time from extreme fatigue. He seems to have been afraid to lose sight of the King, lest he might completely escape him, and Frederick took a malicious pleasure in making him gallop about all day long, from post to post, while he constantly laughed and jested at the obesity that rendered horsemanship a very painful exercise to his victim. In the evening Valori was so tired that he could not stand on his feet, or collect his ideas, and, after a few days of this exercise, the King told him he thought he had better go and rest himself at Breslau, where he would join him before very long. Valori acted on this charitable advice, but was unable to banish the conviction that its motive was the King's desire to get rid of an indiscreet observer of the siege operations.[2]

Valori's embarrassment does him honour, for, to unravel the web of intrigue in which he was caught, he must have been capable of weaving it himself; this he was not, and I do not indeed know who could have been except Frederick. Now that we have been let into the secret by the Prussian

[1] See Translators' note at the end of the Appendix to vol. ii.

[2] Valori to Belle-Isle, October 9 and 12, to Amelot, October 16. (*Correspondance de Prusse.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs. *Mémoires de Valori.*

archivists, it must be acknowledged that never were such conjuring tricks played by any mountebank. The following is, in fact, what took place.

Colonel Goltz had been directed to advise Lord Hyndford to withdraw, as he stated, but he neglected to add that a communication of a totally different nature was to accompany this hint. He was commissioned to inform the English envoy that the King of Prussia considered the proposals of the Queen of Hungary perfectly satisfactory, and asked no more of her, but that, having just signed a treaty with the Queen's enemies, which was in course of execution, he could not decently conclude one of a totally contrary nature with her. The only thing possible would be a provisional arrangement by which the transition might be managed on the following terms :—

"The Prussian army should be allowed to take Neisse, almost without striking a blow, the city defending itself only in appearance, and Marshal Neipperg abstaining from relieving it. In return, the city having been taken, the King was to let Marshal Neipperg withdraw with his army intact, and to refrain from all offensive action against the Queen and her allies. Afterwards, a few months having elapsed—in December for example—the effective and secret truce should be converted into an ostensible and final peace."

Goltz himself the next day placed this proposal in

writing in Lord Hyndford's hands. "I can assure you," said he, "that if the King were acting alone, all would soon be done, but our allies deserve consideration. All that we can do for the welfare of the Queen, to which we are by no means indifferent, is to let her army get away from this, to amuse ourselves in Silesia, and not to act anywhere else against any one. If that suits you, M. de Neipperg may go away to-morrow: if he desires it, I am ready to answer to him with my head for what I have the honour to tell you." [3]

Lord Hyndford might very well have held even the head of a Prussian colonel a feeble guarantee for the honourable execution of a proposal in itself so dishonourable, but Maria Theresa's interests were so deeply involved in recovering the free use of Marshal Neipperg's troops, and securing the neutrality of her most formidable enemy, that he did not hesitate to transmit Colonel Goltz's proposal to Vienna, while he himself remained at Breslau under pretext of illness, to await the answer. Maria Theresa thought as he did, and we may

[3] Colonel Goltz to Lord Hyndford, September 25, 1741. "Political Correspondence," vol. i. p. 355. D'Arneth, vol. i. pp. 321, 324. Grünhagen, *Geschichte des ersten schlesischen Kriegs*, Gotha, 1881, vol. ii. p. 10 and following. According to these two historians, Col. Goltz, Marshal Neipperg, and Lord Hyndford had been in communication respecting this extraordinary arrangement from September 15. The duplicity and dishonesty of Frederick are still more clearly revealed by this detail.

suppose that what she regarded as most important in the proffered arrangement was the postponement of a final treaty which it would secure. With her indomitable confidence in her right, she would look for such a turn of fortune in the interval as might enable her to obtain more advantageous conditions.

The actors being thus all agreed, and the parts distributed, the next thing was to ensure the success of the performance. Fifteen days were fixed for the duration of the fictitious siege of Neisse, and 200 cannon-shots were to be fired on either side. The date of the 16th of October was assigned for the commencement of Marshal Neipperg's retreat. A little difficulty arose about the winter quarters of the Prussian army.

The Austrian general wished the selection of the place to be restricted to that portion of Silesia which was to be ceded, and that portion which was to remain Austrian to be immediately evacuated, but Colonel Goltz very reasonably opposed this. "I have had the honour to tell you," he wrote, "that we want to put an end to the war, but that we do not want to appear to have done so. Now, if we do not take up our winter quarters in Upper Silesia, it will be declaring openly either that there is an arrangement, or that we are fools. I will tell you even more than that; when we are all agreed, we must still fire a few pistol-shots from time to time. We shall keep

quiet, without taking a step in advance, but your hussars will have to come and disturb us occasionally, to carry away some waggons, and make sundry such little signs of hostility. Do not then talk to me any more of this affair of our quarters."

The argument was sound. Upper Silesia was given up to Frederick for the whole winter, on the sole condition that he should not levy contributions of war, and it was stipulated, in set terms, in the protocol which was prepared, that some hostilities should still take place *pro forma*.[1]

This document, of which I have seen the text, is merely a minute, drawn up by Lord Hyndford, and signed by him only. The King had declared that he would not put his signature to any writing, and that his royal word must suffice. Still it was necessary to hear that royal word uttered by his own mouth, and a meeting was indispensable, in order that he might have the protocol read to him, and give his verbal assent to it. The interview was to take place on the 9th of October, in the evening, at a little village called Klein-Schnellendorf, a short distance from Friedland, where the Prussian troops had just been encamped. Frederick took every precaution to conceal his departure from the camp, and his little journey. He let it be known that he

[1] Colonel Goltz to Lord Hyndford, September 30, 1741. "Political Correspondence," vol. i. pp. 359, 371. See Appendix C. for the text of the protocol of Klein-Schnellendorf.

would dine alone on that day, having a great deal of business to transact, and, in order that his absence might be less remarked, had Valori invited to dinner by the Prince of Anhalt, one of his generals. Before he set out, the idea occurred to him (at least we cannot otherwise interpret his conduct), that it would be amusing to give fresh assurances to Belle-Isle, leading him to believe that on that particular day his triumph was near. He therefore wrote to the Marshal with his own hand, that he had just sent off all the necessary powers for the conclusion of the treaty of partition with Saxony and Bavaria. "I have the pleasure," he continued, "of admiring the great part played by the King of France in supporting the Elector, confounding the evil designs of England, disuniting the Dutch, and carrying the war to the very gates of St. Petersburg. It was reserved for Louis XV. to be the arbiter of kings, and to M. de Belle-Isle, to be the organ of his power and his wisdom. I am, with all imaginable esteem and friendship, my dear Marshal, your most faithful friend." And in a postscript, "M. de Valori will inform you of our operations. I still have the enemy before, and 6000 hussars behind me."

When he had written this letter, this "faithful friend" went out, wearing the sardonic smile that was the habitual expression of his face, and followed by a single page, to deal a mortal blow in the

dark to those hopes which he himself had just been raising.[5]

On approaching the place of meeting, Frederick left the page who accompanied him outside, and entered the house alone. The English Minister, Colonel Goltz, and the two Austrian officers, Marshal Neipperg and Major Lentulus, were already there. "The bearing of the King," says Lord Hyndford in his narrative, "was very polite and very agreeable, especially towards the Marshal. After the reading of the document, to which he made no objection, he remained nearly two hours talking in a very friendly manner. 'Nothing could exceed,' he said, 'his satisfaction that the Queen and the Grand Duke, whom he had always loved, had at length abandoned their obstinate attitude, as, had it been otherwise, he would have pursued them to the uttermost. But now he was much moved by their misfortunes, and asked no better than to do them every possible service. Was the Queen in need of money? He could put fifty thousand crowns at her disposal to help her to get through the winter. Then he talked with Marshal Neipperg about the approaching campaign of the Austrian army in Bohemia, and gave him advice respecting the conduct of it. 'Collect all your troops together,' he repeated, 'and

[5] Frederick to Marshal Belle-Isle, October 9, 1741. "Political Correspondence," vol. i. p. 373. This document is inserted in the Political Correspondence within a page of the text of the Protocol signed by Lord Hyndford, and it bears the same date.

then strike hard before you can be struck yourself.' In the event of Neipperg's being fortunate" (here Lord Hyndford must be quoted *verbatim*, otherwise the honest reader would find it difficult to believe his eyes), "he let it be understood that he would place himself on the side of the Queen, but if she were again unfortunate, he would have to think of himself."

Neipperg having then turned the conversation upon the future election, Frederick remarked that, as he had pledged his vote to the Elector of Bavaria, he could not withdraw it immediately, but it depended upon the Archbishop of Mayence to put the thing off, and so leave him time to set himself free. Before he went away, he reiterated his charge of absolute secrecy; "Above all, Valori must be deceived," said he, and he almost dictated the terms of the letter which Lord Hyndford was to write to him, complaining of being dismissed. "Let this letter," he added, "be brought to me during supper; I shall have Valori beside me, and I will show it to him."[6]

For the complete edification of the reader, and also for the thorough revelation of the characters of the personages engaged, it is well to compare the

[6] Räumer, *Beiträge zur neuen Geschichte* (*loc. cit.*).—This writer has had access to the despatches of Lord Hyndford, and quotes them *verbatim*. M. Grünhagen, the archivist of Breslau, the latest narrator of the campaign of Silesia, in a recent work adds to this statement some extracts from the memorandum addressed by Neipperg to the Queen of Hungary at the conclusion of the Conference. There is no important difference between the two accounts. Grünhagen, vol. i. pp. 24, 45.

following passage in a confidential letter to Marshal Belle-Isle, which was written on the same day by the good and honest Elector, from his headquarters, with the foregoing narrative. "We must certainly, my dear Marshal, render justice to the King of Prussia. It would be impossible, as you say, to act with more straightforwardness and honesty than he does, and it is quite just that, on our side, we should act in the same way; in consequence of which you have done very well to communicate the captious proposals of the Queen to him on the spot. I have had no trouble in unmasking the falsity of them, and the Cardinal was quite right to regard this as another attempt, after their fashion, to create suspicion between the King of Prussia and me. But we toss the ball backwards and forwards, so that we always keep together, and, under the powerful protection of the King, nothing in the world will be able to separate us." [7]

As this transaction could not remain secret, notwithstanding the precautions which were taken, and as, besides, the text of the protocol was published in the course of the subsequent disputes between Austria and Prussia, Frederick could not evade the necessity of attempting some explanation of his conduct in his *Histoire de mon Temps*. Generally speaking, he relates his feats of audacity or adroit-

[7] The Elector to Belle-Isle, October 9, 1741. (*Correspondance de Bavière.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

ness without any justification; indeed, he generally prides himself upon them. Here, however, the dose of dishonesty was rather too strong, and he has deigned to attempt a sort of apology. He acknowledges that the operation was "shady," but says that he did not want to complete the ruin of Maria Theresa, because he had perceived that the design of France was to divide Germany into several equal kingdoms, all incapable of resisting herself, which should keep one another in check;—a device by which German liberty would be imperilled. Moreover, as he was sure that the Queen would not observe the secrecy required of her, the arrangement would fall to pieces of itself, without any fault of his, and he would remain free to come to the aid of his allies to any extent that might suit him. Lastly, he adds that he had reason to suspect Fleury of having listened to the proposals of peace made by the Queen, and of allowing himself to be tempted by the offer to cede Luxembourg, and he had, therefore, been obliged to take the initiative, and be on his guard.

Frederick had, no doubt, measured the extent of human folly and credulity before he advanced such arguments as these as a defence of himself, and we must admit that he did not presume too far upon that folly and that credulity, since several historians have declared themselves convinced by them. As a matter of fact, however, these various excuses,

which are all equally worthless, and which contradict each other, do not deserve to be treated seriously. That France, in sending an army across the Rhine, intended to prevent Germany from remaining under, or falling into, the power of one solitary master, and meant to leave it divided into several equal kingdoms, is a certain fact, but was not a great discovery. It was evidently to this very intention that Frederick was lending his aid when he repeatedly reminded France that it was her interest to abase the House of Austria; for he was not so simple as to believe that France would permit a new Power, of like proportions and putting forth similar claims, to substitute itself for ruined Austria. And when he discussed, and ended by concluding, a treaty of partition of the Austrian States with Saxony and Bavaria, it was he himself who was to carry out that project, and who proposed to profit by it. As for the "indiscretion" which he foresaw, no doubt he had good reason to expect it to occur; for the secret of a farce acted in the face of day by two armies of 30,000 men each, had no great chance of being kept. But did the readily foreseen publicity of the transaction alter the odiousness of its nature? Was the bargain any the less intended to enable him to acquire an important place without risk, on the condition of allowing an Austrian army to withdraw intact, and then proceed to dispute the entry of Bohemia with his allies? Now, to effect trans-

actions with one's enemies at the expense of one's friends, is called treachery in every language and in every country in the world. Lastly, we know that there was not a grain of truth in the imputed intentions of Cardinal Fleury, and the supposed clandestine negotiations between him and Maria Theresa; but if there had been any foundation whatever for these suspicions, which there was not, could it ever be justifiable to forestall a possible defection to be apprehended in the future, by a present and consummate perjury?

It is, however, to be observed, that although Frederick tried to satisfy himself and posterity by such poor arguments, he did not care to give all those details of the odious transaction which recent publications have supplied. He extenuated a good deal, and even dissembled not a little in his narrative of facts. The modern historians of Prussia resort to no such expedients, but reveal without scruple all that their hero, notwithstanding his cynical avowals, has taken care to disguise. This, however, does not at all interfere with their admiration, and in no single instance, in the works of Droysen, Rüamer, or Grünhagen, the archivist of Breslau, and the latest of the historians of Prussia, is a reserved point or a scruple to be found. All considerations are lost in the malicious pleasure of seeing the French taken in a snare by a German sovereign. The celebrated historian, Leopold Ranke, whose lofty

and philosophical mind is recognized by all, does indeed state the case of conscience, but he settles it without delay. "The political duty of sovereigns," he says sadly, "is often in conflict with their moral duty." Now, what was this moral duty, according to him? It was to secure the independence of Europe, which was threatened on one side by the preponderance of France, and, on the other, by the possible alliance of Austria and England. It was necessary that a new Power should arise, which would enter into none of these schemes, an independent Prussia which was to secure liberty to all. There is no reply to be made to political and moral considerations such as these.[8]

Events fell out in exact accordance with the plans that had been laid. On the 2nd of November, the town of Neisse surrendered after a siege of a few days' longer duration than had been arranged, but so transparently fictitious, that in the ranks it was currently said the gunners had orders not to hit any one. It needed all the immeasurable and indomitable audacity of Frederick to enable him to write to the Elector as he did, that "the bombs had caused frightful destruction." It is, however, true that he explained the feeble defence made by the place by adding that the garrison was "the scum of the human race."

[8] Leopold Ranke's *Zwölf Bücher Preussischen Geschichte*, book viii. p. 470.

Neipperg's army was in full and peaceful retreat for fifteen days before the surrender of the town, and this fact opened the eyes of the most credulous. From that time forth, the news that peace had been concluded with the Queen of Hungary circulated freely in the ranks, and was the subject of so much jesting comment that the King had to issue a general order prohibiting such talk under severe penalties. "It is to be presumed," writes Valori, "he has not been informed, that this report is spread, not only in talk, but in writing, otherwise he would not have failed to make examples." A circular was sent at the same time to all the Prussian agents at foreign Courts, authorizing them to deny the current rumours, and to affirm that the King would never lend himself to any "accommodation" without the knowledge of his allies. Such was, however, the esteem in which the word of the King of Prussia was already held, that this document was received with entire incredulity.[9]

It matters little, when facts spoke so plainly, whether intentional indiscretion on the part of the Austrian generals and diplomatists was or was not added to these material indications of the treachery of the King of Prussia. Frederick has asserted that

[9] Valori to Belle-Isle, November 4, 1741. (*Correspondance de Prusse.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Frederick to the Elector of Bavaria, November 2, 1741. "Pol. Corr." vol. i. p. 298. The diplomatic circular is not included among the Prussian correspondence; it is inserted in Valori's despatches of November 4.

such was the case, and nothing is more likely. Why should the Austrian agents deny, against evidence, a fact that was so much to their advantage? Thus, in a twinkling, the news that the King of Prussia had turned tail on the Franco-Bavarian alliance, spread like light set to gunpowder, from one end of Europe to the other, and nothing could exceed the confusion into which the military movements as well as the diplomatic operations of the allies were thrown by the mere announcement of such an infidelity.

In the first place, the Elector, who was marching on Prague, stopped short in alarm, fearing to find an enemy's army on which he had not reckoned, either in front or in rear of him. He was also haunted by the thought that, during his absence, the Queen of Hungary, being henceforth free to move as she pleased, might make a descent upon Munich. "How am I to make conquests," writes the Elector, in dismay, "while my house is burning?" In addition to this, the Elector's expedition was so ill-commanded, that his sudden halt had the effect of leaving all his troops, and the French in particular, scattered along a much too extended line, on both sides of the Danube, in a position impossible to hold.

Belle-Isle, though not so easily alarmed, was no less disconcerted. At the first moment, when the alarming rumours reached him, he positively refused to place any faith in them, and assigned as the very legitimate motive of his incredulity that the Prussian

agents had been sent full powers to accede to the treaty of partition of the States of Austria. That these powers had been despatched was certain, and they were dated on the very day of Frederick's secret and confidential interview with the Austrian generals at Klein-Schnellendorf; so that the treaty itself was signed on the 4th November, two days after the fictitious conquest of Neisse, and simultaneously with the prearranged retreat of Marshal Neipperg. It seemed impossible to believe in such stupendous treachery, in such superfluity of deceit, and Belle-Isle especially could not bring himself to acknowledge that he had been duped by flattery to such an extent as this. He persisted in finding explanations for the King of Prussia's conduct, which he forced himself to regard as satisfactory, but he was obliged to confess that immense harm was done by these "unfortunate appearances." On the 27th October he wrote, "A general change of mind has taken place within the last fortnight. I have thirty letters from different parts and towns of Europe, where those who are best affected towards the King and the Elector are alarmed and perplexed, and all the Austrians are reassured. Every day I learn strange things upon this matter." Cardinal Fleury, who had never had either confidence in Frederick, or liking for the adventure into which he had been drawn, did not deceive himself in the least, but, jumping at once to the worst conclusion, already

beheld the Prussian troops joined with those of Maria Theresa.[1]

As in other cases, calm reflection succeeded to excitement and anger. What indeed was the use of indulging in violent indignation or profitless regret? The harm being done, at Frankfort as well as at Versailles, it was the general opinion that nothing should be thought of except the lessening of its effects so far as possible, and that the wrongdoing of the King of Prussia, however grave, did not make his co-operation the less necessary. An angry explanation, with the recriminations that would inevitably take place, would, by irritating him still farther, push him to more undesirable extremities than the temporary neutrality into which he seemed determined to retire. Besides, there was no doubt that he would meet remonstrance by haughty and impertinent denials which would explain nothing and convince no one. The only means of restoring confidence was to induce him, if it could be done, to withdraw a portion of his army from the winter quarters which it was then taking up, and to come in person to the assistance of the Elector in the siege of Prague. His ostensible co-operation was the only possible refutation of the widespread rumour of his defection.

[1] Belle-Isle to Amelot, October 27, 1741, *passim.* (*Correspondance de l'Ambassade auprès de la Diète.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs. See Appendix D. at the end of vol. ii.

Valori was directed to ask for an audience, that he might make an effort to this end, and Fleury prepared the way for him by writing a complimentary letter to the King, in which he carried his ecclesiastical obligation to abjure every feeling of resentment to the point of a sacrifice of his ministerial dignity. "I have the honour," said he, "to congratulate your Majesty on the taking of Neisse, of which, indeed, I entertained no doubt, for it may be said that an enterprise which would be difficult for others is nothing to your Majesty.. *Iter est Achillei.* You take the stage of Europe with a very brilliant rôle, and you show that, in your prolonged retirement, where you were supposed to be occupied with literary amusements only, you were already revolving those great designs which you have been carrying out for a year. You have come out a general like Lucullus, and what is beyond praise, is, that your Majesty, after having proved that none can attack you with impunity, is disposed to win the attachment of your new subjects by justice and moderation. Your Majesty's good wishes for myself are infinitely flattering, and the difference of religion never affects those which I feel most ardently for your Majesty. . . . M. de Valori," he added in conclusion, "is full of zeal, and if he is sometimes a little over-hasty, it is only because he is so extremely anxious to consolidate a perfect understanding between the two Courts; for he is pene-

trated by the most profound respect for your Majesty, whose unfailing panegyrist he is." [2]

We have seen what Valori's panegyrics consisted of, and if he had ever been guilty of an excess of vivacity, it must have been effectually checked by the reception which his request for an audience met with from Podewils. That faithful servant, who had not been informed of the convention of Klein-Schnellendorf, and knew the facts only as everybody else knew them, from public rumour, had probably learned to his cost that his master did not like to be pressed too closely on this delicate point. At the first word touching upon it that Valori uttered, he exclaimed: "Take care of yourself; beware how you go and annoy the King; a mere nothing exasperates him just now; I have never known him harder to deal with than under present circumstances, and if they take a disagreeable turn, you will be personally the victim of it, because he will not fail to throw all the unpleasantness on you." "This speech," remarks Valori demurely, "set me thinking a good deal."

The first interview between the King and the ambassador, who had not met since the taking of Neisse, was, in fact, a very stormy one. At first the King refused to give any explanation on the subject of the current rumours. "What can I do

[2] Fleury to Frederick, November 19, 1741. (*Correspondance de Prusse.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

about it?" he asked. "Can I prevent mischief-makers from spreading lying reports, and fools from believing them?" "But, Sire," observed Valori, "they come from Marshal Neipperg himself." "Ha! has he said so? that is a lie which shall cost him dear." When Valori had to ask the King to take part in the expedition to Bohemia, the conversation became very hot indeed. "I will not put my foot into Bohemia," exclaimed Frederick, "it is too late; why did not the Elector act sooner? The most I could do would be to lend a regiment of hussars, to prove that the reconciliation they talk of is not true; but nothing more." Then he added: "In February I will come in and see how matters stand; if I am satisfied with the arrangements and the magazines that have been established, I will act accordingly; but if I see that affairs are not taking a *morally certain consistence*, I shall content myself *with keeping what I have*, and deploring the bad management that you have *put* (*sic*) into your military operations. I do not want to make war as a subaltern; I want to act as I choose. Count on my word of honour that the reconciliation is not made, and never shall be made, except in concert with my allies; but I affirm to you just as strongly that my troops shall not stir at all this winter." Then, before he terminated the audience, he asked Valori whether he could not have written testimony to the words imputed to Neipperg, and he repeated, "This is an imperti-

nence that shall cost the Queen dear; she will have a few provinces the less for it."[3]

A second interview, which took place a few days later, was not at all more pleasant. This time, Valori, giving up the idea of soliciting support from the Prussian army, limited himself to asking that its winter quarters should not be so widely spread out upon the frontier of Bohemia as to dispute the means of subsistence with the allied armies which were approaching Prague. This demand was made by the express instructions of Belle-Isle, who, having succeeded, with a great deal of trouble, in putting the Elector in motion, was anxious at least to facilitate his first operations. But on the present occasion, Belle-Isle fared like the others. "What! does Marshal Belle-Isle want to do the Prætor in Germany? Does he think I am inclined to let myself be treated like a child?" And, on Valori remarking that, when an alliance existed, the allies ought to act in concert, the King said rudely, "Oh, concert! As for that, you shall have it, and with as many fiddles as you like." Then he went on to say a number of extraordinary things, "Now speaking angrily, and again in jest," said Valori, "so that I no longer know where I am." The despatch concludes with this melancholy phrase: "When I think that the Danish Minister complains

[3] Valori to Belle-Isle, November 11, 1741. (*Correspondance de Prusse.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

of the little consideration they have at Berlin for foreign ministers! How would he bemoan himself if like me he had undergone a part of the campaign with the King of Prussia's army."[1]

Valori rather overdoes his humility when he pretends that he could not make out the meaning of the King's disjointed utterances; for a very acute remark shows us, on the contrary, how clearly he discerned the real state of Frederick's mind through all the confusion of his words. Valori was struck with the King's persistent demand for written evidence of the assertion imputed to Marshal Neipperg, and drew from it the sound conclusion that, since he was asked to supply a document to be put on record, the negotiation with Austria was still going on.

Valori was right: while he professed to be much annoyed by the indiscretion of the Austrian agents, and even angrily declared to his intimates that this breach of trust set him free from all his promises, Frederick by no means intended a rupture, and did not in any way discourage the Court of Vienna from preparing a final treaty, as it had been formally authorized to do by the seventh clause of the protocol of the 9th of October. This we learn from D'Arneth, and also from a letter addressed by Colonel Goltz to Lord Hyndford. While apprising

[1] Valori to Belle-Isle, November 22, 1741. (*Correspondance de Prusse.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

the English Minister of the King's extreme annoyance, Goltz merely argues from it that the Queen would do well to be more liberal and more ready with her concessions. "It is," he says, "eventide (*l'heure du berger*) for the Queen; *aut nunc aut nunquam.*" Thus, Frederick had two treaties in hand at the same time; one with Bavaria, already signed, whereby the ruin of the Austrian monarchy was to be accomplished by the partition of its States; the other, in course of preparation at Vienna, whereby that same monarchy was to be saved at the cost of the sacrifice of the whole or a portion of one province. To which of the two he would finally adhere, Frederick would allow fortune to decide. All depended on the success of the operations about to be attempted by the allied armies in Bohemia, and of these he proposed to remain a quiet spectator. If France and Bavaria carried the day, he would continue on their side, that he might share their triumph; if the fortune of war went against them, he would leave them to their evil fortune, and rest content with his modest gain. In fact, he had the same intentions towards the allies as those which he declared to Marshal Neipperg respecting Austria: "Be fortunate, and I am with you; but, if you are beaten, I shall think of myself."

It is probable that Belle-Isle did not apprehend the situation quite so clearly as this, but he was

perfectly well aware that from the moment at which nothing was to be expected from either the fidelity or the friendship of Frederick, the enterprise of the allied forces in Bohemia assumed a decisive importance. If that enterprise should be a failure, the defection of the King of Prussia would be followed by universal desertion. He already perceived symptoms of this in the language of the agents of all the Electors who had promised him their votes; for it had suddenly become reserved and ambiguous. He had no longer a choice; he must stake the destiny of the Empire, of Germany, and of France, and also his own fortunes on one throw.

On calculating the chances, his anxiety became extreme. Slowly, painfully, after many a long march and counter-march, the Elector had at last brought the troops within sight of Prague. He had nearly 50,000 men with him, and had left a strong division at Linz, under the command of the Marquis de Ségur, to guard the occupation of Upper Austria, and the communications with Bavaria.

This was a sufficient force for the siege of the place, which was feebly garrisoned, provided it were proceeded with at once. The least delay might be fatal; the season was advanced, and in that northern climate operations might be rendered impossible by an early and severe winter. Moreover, the Austrian troops were rapidly concentrating themselves in Moravia, where Neipperg, set free by

the Neisse transaction, had made his junction with a hurriedly recruited army-corps in which Hungarian contingents already figured, and which was commanded by the Grand Duke himself. If this auxiliary force should come up behind the besiegers before the city had opened its gates, the position would be serious. Days, hours, even minutes, were precious. How could Belle-Isle expect that the Elector, of whose irresolution he was well aware, would now exhibit precision and promptitude, would act at once and arrive in the nick of time? He felt that he must rely on himself only, and in this emergency he resolved to leave Frankfort, and proceed in person to the army.[5]

Urgent letters from Cardinal Fleury pressed the Marshal to join the allied forces, and all the generals of the French army, who invoked him as a saviour, loudly called upon him to comply. This was, nevertheless, a serious step for Belle-Isle to take, at the very moment when the Archbishop of Mayence (probably with a dubious intention) had fixed the opening of the Diet for the beginning of December. But of two difficulties (created by his having undertaken to play two leading parts), the Marshal had to choose the least, and besides, one of those moments was come at which the fortune of war overrules the will of men. It was no longer in the electoral urn, that

[5] Belle-Isle to Breteuil, Minister of War, November 22, 1741. Ministry of War.

Charles Albert had to look for his imperial crown, but on the ramparts of Prague.

Belle-Isle began his journey on the 12th of November. He meant to pass through Dresden, with the object of confirming the vacillating purpose of the King of Poland. Unhappily, his resolution had been taken too late. The prodigious labours of a whole year, fatigue, worry, anxieties of every kind, sleepless nights, and over-burdened days, had exhausted his constitution, which had never been strong. He was suffering so much from sciatica on the day of his departure, that he could hardly get into his coach; on the road the pain increased, and when Valori, who had come to Dresden to see him, met him on his arrival, on the steps of the palace of Hubertsberg, he recoiled in surprise and grief. The Marshal was altered almost beyond recognition; his sufferings were so severe that he could hardly put one foot before the other, and a huge swelling on the eyelid disfigured one side of his face.[6]

He had, however, an interview on that day with the King of Poland; but when he attempted to leave his bed on the morrow he was unable to move, and was obliged to acknowledge that, notwithstanding Bossuet's saying, a warlike soul is not always the ruler of the body which it animates. He was

[6] Belle-Isle to Amelot, November 17, 19, 22, 1741. (*Correspondance de l'Ambassade à la Diète*). Ministry of Foreign Affairs. *Mémoires de Valori*, vol. i., p. 131.

forced to let his brother set out without him, and the Chevalier departed, commissioned to impart the Marshal's instructions, and to inculcate patience on those who were anxiously awaiting his arrival.

It would be difficult to describe the feelings of Marshal Belle-Isle, when he found himself thus detained by severe bodily pain far from either of the two places at which his presence was so urgently required. His brother's first letters were not calculated to console him. The Chevalier found everything in confusion, the Elector bewildered, the French generals refusing to obey him, and the commencement of the siege rendered impossible by the non-arrival of the Saxon artillery. Neipperg and his "wild Hungarians" were reported to be within five leagues of the city. At any cost, even if he had to be carried, the Marshal must come. "The more I see of the state of things," wrote the Chevalier, "the more I am convinced that your presence is indispensably necessary to prevent the most serious disasters and catastrophes. I feel the force of all the reasons that you can allege; I know that you cannot set everything right unless you are able to mount your horse, but still I am convinced that, although your infirmities may prevent your doing all the good you might otherwise effect, your presence will avert the greatest misfortunes. I have been regarded as a precursor, and I hear on all sides of the effect which my announcement of your

speedy arrival is producing upon the troops." He added that, as it was impossible to make a feasible plan, the most absurd ideas were mooted—such for instance as taking the town by surprise and escalade —but that he hoped to be able to put down every folly of this kind.[7]

Belle-Isle, who was now even more helpless than before, mustered strength to dictate the following reply: "Your letter overwhelms me with distress; I plainly see all the evils which my presence might perhaps remedy, but I am totally unable to proceed to the army in my present condition. It would be the height of folly to have myself carried thither, to be probably imprisoned in my bed or in a chair, and unable to move, no matter what happened. This cruel position agitates me to such an excess that my illness must inevitably be increased, and I cannot fail to succumb to it."[8]

A few days went by, and the Marshal was still suffering excruciating and unrelieved pain, when of a sudden the news that Prague had been taken reached Dresden, and, among a number of despatches, Belle-Isle received the following note, written in a hand which he knew, inimitably ill-spelt, and totally destitute of accents or punctuation.

[7] The Chevalier de Belle-Isle to the Marshal, Prague, November 24, 1741. (*Correspondances diverses.*) Ministry of War.

[8] The Marshal to the Chevalier de Belle-Isle, November 2, 1741. (*Correspondances diverses.*) Ministry of War.

"SIR,—You desired that Prague should be taken; it is taken. The Governor surrendered to me, and I write to you from his room. I could not say enough to you in praise of the valour of the troops, and especially of the good conduct of M. Chevert, Lieutenant-Colonel. I am rather busy keeping order, which is not easy in a city taken sword in hand.[9]

"MAURICE DE SAXE."

The bold Saxon had a good right to be the first to send the news; for it was owing to him that the prodigy had been accomplished, and—O vanity of human prudence!—thanks to one of those daring freaks which the Chevalier rebuked as follies, and which the Marshal, had he been present, would probably have discountenanced.

But, after all, was it credible? At a time when faith in the marvellous was considerably shaken, and war had attained the rank of an exact science; how was it to be believed that a city of nearly one hundred thousand inhabitants, tolerably well fortified, would surrender, after a night-attack of a few hours' duration, ere there was even a trench opened before its ramparts, almost without firing a gun, as if to

[9] Here is this characteristic note:—"Monsfeur vous aves desire que Prague fut pri il ait prit le gouverneur sait rendus a moy et je vous ecri de sa chambre je ne saures au demeurant assez vous fair delloge de la valeur des troupes et surtout de la bonne conduite de M. Chever lieutenamp colonel je suis un peu occupe a maintenir l'ordre se qui nait pas aisse dans une ville pris l'epee a la min."

the sword only, as in the glorious days of Amadis and Roland. This deed of prowess was, in truth, like an old tale of chivalry.

The incredible was, however, the true. By information which he received from a peasant, Maurice was led to believe that, on the right bank of the stream that runs through Prague (the Moldau), opposite to that occupied by the camp of the allies, a point of the ramparts where the guard was not strong might be approached without preparatory works, and taken by storm. He went in disguise to examine the spot, and came back convinced that the thing could be done; but when he submitted his plan to the Elector's council of war it was met with almost unanimous opposition, the Chevalier de Belle-Isle, in particular, was strongly against it. "This," it was said, "was one of that madcap's notions, after his Tartar-fashion of dealing with men and things."

And yet, what was to be done? Hour by hour the danger grew more urgent; time and means for the regular conduct of a siege were equally wanting, and at any moment Marshal Neipperg and the Grand Duke might appear. "We were in a position," said Séchelles, the Intendant, afterwards, "to have recourse to empirics." At last, Maurice, who was sustained by the opinion of the general in command of the Saxon army, and especially by the imperious voice of necessity, prevailed. It was

32245

decided that three attacks should be made simultaneously—two on the left bank of the Moldau, by the French and the Saxons respectively; the attack by the latter being the only one likely to succeed. At the moment when this display of troops and artillery had drawn the whole of the garrison to that side, Maurice, with his picked corps, was to attempt the bold surprise on the right bank, and in the darkness; the whole risk being his. The number of men to be employed in so secret an enterprise was necessarily limited, and Maurice made his selection with the greatest care. His little troop was to be divided into two squadrons. Four companies of grenadiers of the Beauce and Alsace regiments, and 400 dragoons, were to make the night assault; this was the really perilous operation. The rest, composed of 1000 infantry and about 1200 cavalry, were to remain in the rear to enter the city with Maurice himself, if the assailants succeeded in getting in and opening the gates. When it came to nominating the officers for each of the two bodies of troops, there was great emulation among the young nobles in the army; every man of them wanted to have a share in the great adventure. The command of this perilous expedition was finally entrusted to two leaders, who differed as widely in age and position as they resembled each other closely in valour. The one was Count de Broglie, the Marshal's son, a very distinguished officer, who

had been on active service in his fifteenth year, and now, in his twenty-fourth year, and his ninth campaign, was in command of the Luxembourg regiment. The other was a humble soldier of fortune, François de Chevert, a lieutenant-colonel in the Beauce regiment; he had never enjoyed any patronage, and had risen, slowly, and with many difficulties, to a secondary position in mature age. On that great day, however, honour was done to proved merit and experience, and to the great displeasure of the young colonel, precedence was given to the inferior in rank. Chevert was to lead with the grenadiers; Broglie was to follow with the dragoons.

At ten o'clock at night the expedition started from the little village of Couratiz, and reached the ravine which stretched along the foot of the rampart, at one in the morning. Maurice, after he had gone down with Chevert to fix upon the point of attack, returned to take up his post with his reserve, commanded by the Marquis de Mirepoix, at the other side of the ditch, on a little height which faced the principal bastion. Scaling-ladders were then brought to the indicated spot, and as these indispensable implements had been taken hap-hazard from the neighbouring villages, and were the ordinary masons' and slaters' ladders, it took three of them, one fastened to the other, to reach the top of the wall. When the nice operation of lashing the ladders firmly together was accomplished, and they were

placed in position, Chevert turned to his grenadiers, and asked which was the brave fellow who wanted to be the first to set his foot upon the ladder. A sergeant of the Alsace regiment, named Pascal, stepped out of the ranks, and then followed the dialogue which tradition has preserved in its heroic simplicity: "You want to climb up first, comrade?" "Yes, colonel." "When you are on the wall the sentinel will call out to you, *Wer da?*" (who goes there?) "Yes, colonel." "You will not answer." "No, colonel." "He will fire on you." "Yes, colonel." "He will miss you." "Yes, colonel." "You will kill him." "Yes, colonel."

So said, so done; only that no sooner had Pascal the grenadier set foot upon the wall than the surprised sentinel fired in the air and ran away; and eight grenadiers with Chevert, four dragoons with Broglie, were already on the parapet of the bastion when the watch at the nearest guard-house took the alarm. At this moment, Maurice, watching the movements from below, and apprised by the clash of arms that the alert had been given, rose, and shouted, "Help, dragoons!" (*A moi, dragons!*) to attract attention to his side. The watch, still bewildered, fired in the direction of the voice, and Maurice ordered the men who were with him to answer the fire; thus, under cover of the discharge of musketry on both sides of the ravine, the scaling of the wall went on silently, the grenadiers and the

dragoons climbing so eagerly that some of the overladen ladders broke under the weight of the men. Several officers who were not told off for this service—among them the young Duc de Chevreuse—had to be restrained almost by force from slipping in among their comrades in the dark. When a whole company had been formed, the drums beat, and they marched upon the guard-house, shouting, *Vive le Roi!* At the same moment the noise of the two preconcerted attacks arose at the other extremity of the town, and the whole garrison hastened thither, so that there were no soldiers to come to the aid of the surprised post. Chevert, having seized upon the guard-house without any resistance, and then upon the gate close by, let down the drawbridge, and Maurice, with his cavalry and all those who were with him, entered the city. He rode through the deserted streets at dawn. D'Argenson relates—taking the fact from I know not what correspondence—that there had been a ball that night in this part of the city, and that the French officers, meeting the ladies who were coming out, gallantly offered to escort them home. It is certain that there was neither disorder nor pillage. Maurice went straight to the governor's house, and that functionary, who had not been informed of anything that had occurred, unresistingly allowed himself to be made prisoner.

The rumour of the event spread rapidly; the

garrison did not long defend itself against the two other attacks. The Saxons, who were the first to pass in, rushed in a crowd to congratulate their countrymen. At their head were two superior officers who both claimed to be his brothers: the Chevalier de Saxe, whose pretensions were recognized, and General Rustowski, who boasted that his mother had preceded the fair Aurora in the affections of Augustus II.: Maurice eagerly embraced them on their entrance, saying: "*Canailles!* you see I am the eldest, for I have arrived before you." The Elector came afterwards with the whole of his staff, crying for joy, and embracing everybody.

The effect of the dashing deed was complete.[1]

[1] The narrative of the taking of Prague forms the subject of several official reports comprised in the Correspondence of the Ministry of War. There is more than one account furnished by the Duc de Chevreuse, as an eye-witness, to his father, the Duc de Luynes, and inserted in the Memoirs of the latter (vol. iv., p. 482). M. Saint-René Taillandier has recently published a letter from Maurice himself to the Chevalier de Folard, in which he describes the feat. This account ought naturally to be received with more confidence than any of the others, nevertheless it is difficult to reconcile it on many points with the official reports. The dialogue between Chevert and the grenadier is an anecdote of the time which has become legendary. The author of the memoir of Chevert in Michaud's "Biographie Universelle," must have heard the anecdote from Chevert himself in his old age, and I was told it when I was a child by persons who had it direct from Count—afterwards Marshal—de Broglie. I also possess a letter written by Count de Broglie, in which he complained that in the official narrative of the event Chevert only was spoken of, while no sufficient mention was made of the part he himself had taken in the escalade.

Belle-Isle thrilled with delight upon his bed of pain, and the surprise gave his illness a turn; he began to recover. The facts of the case did not, however, prevent him from asserting, a few days afterwards, that the whole thing had been done by his orders and according to his instructions.

Maria Theresa, expecting from day to day to receive news of a victory which should redound to the honour of her beloved husband, is said to have wept tears of anger. "Here is Prague lost," she wrote to her faithful confidant, "and the consequences will be very bad. Now, Klinski, is the time when courage is needed, when the territory and the Queen must be preserved, for I am a poor princess without that. For my part, my resolution is taken, everything must be risked and lost to sustain Bohemia, and *on that basis* you may work and arrange everything. I do not say but that I shall have ruined Hungary; that it will take twenty years for her to recover, but I must have territory (*Grund und Boden*), and for that all my troops and all the Hungarians would have to be killed before I could yield anything. In short, this is the critical moment, do not spare the country, it must be kept up. . . . You will say that I am cruel, and it is true; but I know well that all these cruelties which *I may cause to be done* now to sustain the country, I shall be hereafter enabled to repair a hundredfold,

(*ersetzen hundertfältig*), and I will do so, but at this moment I close my heart to pity."

That Maria Theresa should entertain these sentiments cannot be astonishing to any one; but it would be interesting to know what Frederick felt. He was certainly surprised, but was he pleased or vexed by an event that once more forced him into action, while it afforded him fresh chances? I imagine that his thoughts were those of a navigator who, having long waited for a wind, finding it rising at length, decides on putting out to sea instead of entering the harbour. At all events, on the 30th November he warmly congratulated Belle-Isle on his glorious conquest, and in testimony of his satisfaction placed six squadrons of dragoons and ten squadrons of hussars at the Marshal's service, to aid in reaping the fruits of it. It would seem that the fatigue of his troops had passed off, or that they had already had time to rest themselves. "I hope, with all my heart, my dear friend," he wrote a few days later, (December 9), that your health may be speedily restored. So soon as you know where Neipperg will remain, I beg you will send me the Chevalier de Belle-Isle, and inform me through him of all your ideas, so that we may talk together, for my fingers are itching to act with *éclat* and utility on behalf of my dear Elector."

"I understand," said Belle-Isle, when he received these tardy protestations. "He comes to our aid

when we no longer want him." It was also remarked that Frederick had given a handsome gratuity to the first courier who brought him the good news; and this was a significant proof of his satisfaction, for the King's economy was proverbial.

It was less easy to explain this sudden change, and especially to render it credible to Valori, who had been on the spot, and had seen things more closely; so that Frederick considered himself obliged to reiterate the assurance—and, this time, with many oaths—that he had never dreamed, even in imagination, of treating with the Queen of Hungary. "I defy you," said the king, "to show anything in my writing that proves it, even a scrap of paper the size of my hand." Valori reminded him, with a smile of dubious meaning, of the surrender of the town of Neisse; but he quickly retorted, "And have you not just entered Prague without resistance, and might I not say in my turn, that you have an understanding with the Queen." Then at dinner he drank to the King of Bohemia, and catching the mention of Lord Hyndford's name he said, "Do you want us to break through the neutrality promised to the King of England at once, on the spot? If you do, I am your man. *I have an old mastiff* to let loose upon that monarch." "You will remember, monseigneur," wrote Valori, when transmitting this strange proposal to Belle-Isle, "the King of Prussia said to you that all was

English about him, and indeed I have had reason to perceive that it was not French.[2]

All this, however, was nothing in comparison with the demonstrations of love and fealty sent by post to Versailles. How could the cardinal have doubted the sincerity of his most faithful ally! "The artifice employed by the Court of Vienna to separate us," wrote Frederick, on the 3rd of December, "is all the more clumsy, that it is so plain as to be unmistakable by even the dullest politician that I could not take any step more contrary to my own fame, and my own interests, than making a plastered-up peace with my enemies; they would naturally preserve the leaven of enmity in their heart towards me, whom they regard as the author of their misfortunes. The vicinity of the Elector of Bavaria suits me much better than that of the Austrians, with whom I could not live in security, and of whom I might say with Cicero, 'No, Catiline, you shall not live in a place where I am. Begone, then, Catiline, for walls must divide us.' The true political principles of my house demand that it should be closely united with France, since by means of that union our rôle in Europe is an infinitely finer one than that which we should play by following after England and Holland. But I must not in my turn encroach upon the leisure of the

[2] Valori to Amelot and Belle-Isle, December 2, 1741. (*Correspondance de Prusse.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Atlas of Europe. If I write you long letters, it is because I delight in conversing with you, and because friendship is always garrulous." [3]

The English envoy, Lord Hyndford, had a rueful experience of the King's change of humour when he came on the 1st of December to ascertain whether Frederick was disposed to proceed to a final treaty with Austria, on the basis of the agreement made at Klein-Schnellendorf. Frederick received him as if he could scarcely believe in a politician's being so simple as to suppose that promises were to be kept when circumstances had changed; he hardly even tried for a moment to avail himself of the pretext which the pretended indiscretion of Austria might have afforded him. After a few words on that subject, he said, "My lord, I am going to speak frankly to you. The Austrians have been so foolish as to allow Prague to be taken before their eyes, without risking a battle. If they had been fortunate I do not know what I should have done. Now we have 150,000 men, and against them 70,000, it is probable that we should beat them; then nothing would remain for them but to make peace as best they could." "But," said Lord Hyndford, "if Austria publishes the arrangement of the 9th of October, how will you explain it?" "If Austria does that, she will show her folly, and perhaps she may not be believed." Then, in order to make

[3] Frederick to Fleury, December 3. "Pol. Cor.," vol. i., p. 420.

it clear that all was broken off, he began to levy contributions of war upon that portion of Silesia which he had promised to spare.[4] "In short," wrote Lord Hyndford to his minister, "there is nothing to be done with the King of Prussia, so long as his enterprises prove so successful."

Lord Hyndford was right; but why should he have been surprised? What good in the world would it do to break one's word, if thereby one were not to be more free to follow fortune!

A few days later, Frederick himself wrote to Voltaire with a touch of philosophic melancholy. "Trickery, dishonesty, and duplicity are unfortunately the chief characteristics of most men who are at the head of nations, and who ought to be their example. The study of the human heart on subjects of this kind is a very humiliating thing, it makes me regret a thousand times my dear retreat, the arts, my friends, and my independence."[5]

[4] Räumer, *Beiträge zur neuen Geschichte.*

[5] Frederick to Voltaire. *Correspondance générale*, February 3, 1742.

CHAPTER V.

The Moravian expedition and the quarrel of the two Marshals—Revolution at St. Petersburg—Accession of the Empress Elizabeth, who abandons Austria and makes advances to France—Arrival of Belle-Isle at Prague—Marshal de Broglie is sent to replace him—Discontent of De Broglie; he quits Prague and returns to Frankfort—The Elector of Bavaria remains at Mannheim—The election takes place on the 26th of January, 1742—Triumph of Belle-Isle, and joy of the French Cabinet—Bad news from the army left in Bohemia—Marshal de Broglie is threatened at Pisek by the Grand Duke—He forces him to retire—Difficult position of the Marquis de Ségur, who is attacked by the Austrian general Khevenhüller—Broglie is pressed to go to his assistance—He demands the support of Frederick—Frederick's singular antipathy to Marshal de Broglie—The real cause of this sentiment—Frederick announces that he is about to take the field in aid of the French—He repairs to Dresden to confer with Augustus III.—The Dresden Conference—Frederick proposes to march on Vienna, through Moravia, and demands the command of the French and Saxon troops—Opposition of Maurice de Saxe, and discontent of Marshal de Broglie—Ségur is blockaded in Linz, and forced to capitulate—Frederick perseveres with his expedition—Marshal de Broglie recalls the French troops—The Moravian expedition fails, and Frederick re-enters Bohemia—Disagreement between the French generals and diplomatists—Marshals de Broglie and Belle-Isle write to Versailles complaining of one another—Opinions of the minister and the Court—Fleury's vacillation—The Chevalier de Broglie—The Abbé de Broglie—Belle-Isle comes to France to defend himself—He is made duke and placed at the head of the army of

Bohemia, while Broglie receives another command in Bavaria —The taking of Egra—Marshal de Broglie sends the news of his victory by his son, who is made Brigadier.

Good fortune seldom comes single: at the moment when a deed of chivalrous daring rendered the French masters of Prague in a few hours, a military revolution at St. Petersburg deprived Maria Theresa of her only friend even more unexpectedly. The Regent Anne, who governed in the name of her son, the little Czar Ivan, and whose sympathy for Austria was well known, was suddenly succeeded, on the 6th of December, 1741, by the Princess Elizabeth, youngest daughter of Peter the Great and Catherine I. This revolution was accomplished in a single night, and it was the work of the old Russian spirit, struggling, as it sometimes struggles even at the present time, against the invasion of German manners, and especially of German functionaries. Elizabeth, being apprised of the sullen discontent which was caused in the inferior ranks of the army by the influence exercised over the Regent by her husband, the Duke of Brunswick, and still more, by her lover, the Saxon minister, and being placed in communication with the subaltern officers of the guard on duty at the gate of the palace, had merely to present herself there one morning at daybreak and pronounce her father's name; every door

was opened to her. She walked straight into the apartment of the Regent, who was still sleeping, and with her own hands took the little Emperor out of his cradle. During the day, the child, his mother, ministers, chamberlains, every one who bore a name of German origin, were all sent either into Siberia, or into exile. Although the adventure bore the appearance of a revival of patriotism, nobody doubted that the project had been formed by two Frenchmen. One of these was the ambassador of Louis XV. himself, the Marquis de la Chétardie (that clever person who had succeeded for a moment in pleasing Frederick at Berlin), the other an obscure physician of the name of Lestocq, the son of a refugee who had come to seek his fortune on the banks of the Neva. They had both contrived to gain the confidence of the future Empress, the ambassador, indeed, (if the scandalous chronicle is to be believed), might boast of something more than her friendship.

Frederick, with his habitual cynicism, indulges, in his "Histoire de mon Temps," in an insinuation which would be less flattering to our national self-love. He gives it very clearly to be understood that the Princess Elizabeth had not hesitated to dispense her favours liberally, in order to obtain the suffrages of the army. He also adds that on this point there was not much to choose between herself and the cousin whom she had dispossessed, except that the one

covered her frailty with a veil of prudery, while the other gave to hers the more popular form of debauch.[1]

The new sovereign, having immediately placed herself in intimate relations with the French Legation, and having entered upon peaceful negotiations with Sweden, the whole region of the North found itself free, and the allies in Bohemia were delivered from all alarm upon their rear. Two feats of strength and skill thus accomplished in fifteen days, raised the renown of the valour, gallantry, and tactics of the French very high, and Belle-Isle, who was regarded as the moving spirit of all these exploits, was carried on a litter into the city of Prague, in all the glow and glory of triumph.

He found that there was a heavy task for an invalid before him when he got there; for the fortunate night of the 26th of November had rather increased than lessened the confusion of the allied armies. They were without a leader, as well as without union, and they were more than ever at the mercy of chance, which had for the nonce served them well; but it was high time to place them once more under settled direction.

Belle-Isle, notwithstanding his infirmities, still believed himself competent to this task; his ardent and eager spirit refreshed itself by action, and

[1] For the curious details of this palace revolution see the recent and very interesting work of M. Albert Vandal, entitled, *Louis XV. et Élizabeth de Russe.*

the indomitable confidence which constituted his strength, and communicated itself to all around him, revived at the least appearance of success. Persuaded that he had done everything, and that he could still do everything, while lying in his bed, or confined to his room, he sent off order after order, and sincerely believed that discipline would be restored to the army by his voice, while he felt his strength returning to him. "I have now put you in full possession," he wrote to the minister, "of the success of the enterprise that was accomplished by my passage through Dresden, and all things are so much changed since I am here, that there is no reason for anything but tranquillity and good hope in all political and general affairs. The peace of mind that I enjoy since I have been here has considerably re-established my health." Belle-Isle forgot one thing only: in a fit of despondency, he had written to the same minister from Dresden, that the double task he had undertaken exceeded human strength, and that he recognized his error in expiating it.

His letter, which it was too late to recall, had arrived at its address, and the answer to it was an announcement that Marshal de Broglie had been sent off to take command of the army.[2]

[2] Belle-Isle to Amelot, Prague, December 12, 1741. *Correspondance de l'Ambassade auprès de la Diète.* Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

This resolution was as natural as it was reasonable; the selection of the Marshal's successor was no less so. Since the death of Berwick and Villars, and until Belle-Isle should have realized all that was expected of him, Broglie held by common consent a foremost rank among the superior officers of the French army. His conduct in Italy during the preceding war was justly appreciated: it is true that, subsequently to a victory gained under the walls of Parma, he had allowed himself to be surprised by night by a party of Austrians, in a manner which had given rise to a great deal of jesting at Versailles, but as he had recouped himself on the following day by a more brilliant victory before Guastalla, that little misadventure had not injured him at all in the esteem of sound military critics. Again, it had been his duty, as Governor of Strasburg, to preside over the always difficult operation of the passage of the Rhine by an army in the field. The troops had defiled under his eyes, man by man. He knew all the officers, and their staff. His three sons were with the colours, and the eldest had just taken a brilliant part in the latest feat of arms. He was entering upon the command at the close of an operation, one of whose most important phases had already passed through his hands. Besides, he was Belle-Isle's senior in age and rank, and this regulated in advance all the questions of precedence between the two marshals, without offence to either.

Some drawbacks (and they always exist) had to be placed against these advantages. In the first place, the new commander-in-chief, who was born in 1672, was in his seventieth year, an age which, even in our time, and with our military laws, is regarded as rather advanced for a general, but which appeared much more so at a period when active life began earlier, and physical strength was sooner exhausted.

In the course of the preceding summer he had experienced one of those accidents of old age, which friends and families disguise, and a man does not like to acknowledge to himself; it had the appearance of a first attack of apoplexy. It was remarked that the Marshal's temper, which had never been mild, had, since his recovery, become obstinate and irascible, and this created a difficulty in his management of men and affairs. In addition, he had been for several years ambassador in England, at a period when the peaceful policy of Fleury prevailed, and had lived there on excellent terms with Sir Robert Walpole. On this account he claimed to add diplomatic knowledge to his military experience, and did not hesitate openly to condemn the object as well as the general direction of the war. Had a report of his criticisms reached Berlin? This I cannot tell, but it is certain that those who had access to Frederick knew that he was in the habit of expressing himself with great severity regarding the Governor of Strasburg, and that, in particular,

he retained a very unpleasant recollection of the visit he had been obliged to make to him, on the occasion of the juvenile escapade which I have previously related.[3]

The King recurred again and again to this adventure with a singular mingling of raillery and anger, complaining, first, that the Marshal wanted to have him arrested, and afterwards, that he had betrayed the secret of his incognito by his excessive politeness. This might have been unknown at Versailles, and Fleury, had he been aware of it, was himself so little vindictive of temper, that he never could have believed so puerile a matter would have been allowed to play a part in serious affairs.[4]

Belle-Isle, however, who was very much mortified that he had been taken at his word, used these sound objections to the nomination of Broglie to justify his disappointment, and make others partake of it. He was too clever to protest against a decision which he had solicited, and too prudent to

[3] See preceding volume.

[4] Belle-Isle to Valori, December 28, 1741. (*Correspondance de Prusse.*) The Marquis de Beauvau to Amelot, December 15, 1741. (*Correspondance de Bavière.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs. An unsigned letter from Strasburg addressed to Belle-Isle, and which is included in the various correspondence of the Ministry of War says, "Every kind of miserable and puerile talk goes on around this man (Marshal de Broglie) against the negotiations of Marshal de Belle-Isle, and against the engagements which he has induced France to enter into." (See Appendix F. at the end of this volume on the relations between the King of Prussia and Marshal de Broglie.)

put himself in the wrong by prematurely running down his colleague; so he confined himself to making answer that the appointment was an excellent one, only that it was to be feared Marshal de Broglie's health would not prove to be more robust than his own. In any case, he would so arrange that the Marshal, on his arrival, should find everything in order and all defects repaired.

It is, however, allowable to suppose that he was not absolutely ignorant of the numerous remonstrances addressed to Versailles by the officers of his staff, protesting that all would be lost if a chief, adored by the army were withdrawn from it. The Elector also wrote a most melancholy letter to Louis XV., in which he complained, *as a son to his father*, that his trusted adviser had been taken away from him, and it is probable that Belle-Isle was aware of this proceeding on his part.

Fleury, who was always unhappy when he had displeased anybody, and who understood with half a word, tried vainly to heal the wound by his customary fair-speaking. "Pray remember," he wrote to Belle-Isle, "the state in which you were at Dresden, also the condition of our army in Bohemia; fear and discouragement had taken possession of it." Every letter, without exception, spoke of anticipated disaster. "In such a situation could we leave our troops without a head, not knowing what misfortunes might be awaiting us? We have emerged

from it now, and if we could have foreseen, we should have left things where they were, but we must at present consult upon the situation in which we are. I beg you to be persuaded that I have written to Marshal de Broglie as I ought, and I have not concealed from him that the King desired you should always have the direction of general affairs, and that he was to occupy himself with military operations only, and is even to advise upon them with you in the first instance. All the honour which may redound to us is due to you, and it is only just that you should have it. When you are free, and have nothing more to do at Frankfort, do not fear that you will be left idle, or will have to serve in a secondary position. I am not so unjust as to think of such a thing, and I earnestly pray you to be tranquil. Your fame and your reputation are as dear to me as to yourself."

Whether Belle-Isle was satisfied with these assurances or not, he was careful to make no secret of them, but to let it be clearly understood that, in reality, he was still the master, and that he would return without delay. In order to prepare for this, heen joined, or at least he authorized the officers with whom he was in friendly relations to keep him apprised by private correspondence of all the movements of his successor. Considering the inimical disposition which already prevailed, he could not have taken a step better calculated to

destroy the moral authority of Marshal de Broglie. No sooner had his successor arrived than Belle-Isle set out for Frankfort, where diplomatic honours, sufficiently brilliant to induce him to take the temporary postponement of his other hopes with patience, were awaiting him.[5]

It was not, in fact, the city of Prague only, or even the crown of Bohemia that had been taken by escalade, it was the imperial dignity itself.

The great news had been received in full Diet at Frankfort, the Electors or their representatives, had been already sitting for some days under the presidency of the Archbishop of Mayence himself, but they had done nothing as yet but discuss those questions of precedence and etiquette which invariably crop up in German assemblies. In a moment everything yielded before the decree of fortune, and unanimity was at once secured to the protégé of France. In the first place, by the very fact of the conquest of Prague, the question of the admission or the exclusion of the representatives of Maria Theresa was settled, for, from the moment that Bohemia recognized a new king *de facto*, the

[5] Belle-Isle to Fleury, Fleury to Belle-Isle, December 15, 1741. (*Correspondance de l'Ambassade auprès de la Diète.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Belle-Isle to Valori, December 20, 1741, "It may happen that M. de Broglie will only pass the winter here, knowing that my health will be re-established, and in fact I am better and better." (*Correspondance de Prusse.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

least that could be done was to leave his Electorate vacant. Of the hundred votes which remained, three were secured to Charles Albert—his own, and those of Saxony and Brandenburg; a fourth, that of Hanover, was the price of the neutrality promised to King George. The three ecclesiastical Electors, having waited only to know on which side strength lay, had no more reason for hesitation. Lastly, the Elector Palatine, although a cadet of the house of Bavaria, required a great deal of solicitation, but at length he decided upon following the majority, since, by Frederick's renunciation of the Duchies of Berg and Jülichs his inheritance was fully secured to his nephew, the Margrave of Sulzbach, the future husband of one of his granddaughters.

It was at Mannheim, at the residence of this relative, with whom he had hitherto been on very cool terms, that Charles Albert awaited the no longer doubtful result of the election. In the meantime Marshal Belle-Isle had gone to Frankfort to put the finishing touch to his work. At Mannheim the festivities of a double wedding were to be celebrated; that of the heir-designate of the Electorate, and that of Charles Albert's own brother, Duke Clement of Bavaria, to whom another of the Princesses Palatine was betrothed.

These fêtes, by which the accession of a new power was celebrated in advance, were very brilliant, and if I had not already trespassed on the patience

of the reader by a picture of the ridiculous frivolities of the little German courts, I could not resist the temptation of relating here several burlesque details which would be worthy the attention of a comic writer. I may, however, be permitted to record that, during the entire duration of the rejoicings, the French Resident, M. de Tilly, and the future Emperor himself were engrossed by two considerations exclusively; one was how to hinder their host from expending all the revenues of his little State, and even by anticipation those of his successor, on a boundless profusion of dresses and lights—a small portion of the money thus lavished would have been exceedingly welcome to the treasury of the Bavarian army in the form of subsidy—the other was the fear that the eccentric old man, by taking too animated a part in the festivities, might bring on a relapse of a serious malady to which he was subject. His inopportune death, if it occurred before the election was completed, would cause a delay which might prove disastrous.

"The Elector," wrote the Resident, "has given each of his daughters nine coats, which are, so to speak, masses of gold and silver; he has at least as many for himself—one more rich than the others —and he changes them every day. The expenditure in wax lights is enormous, and if the King were to give him the village of Landau to decrease the number by one, he would not accept it."

Then, at the Court ball, which took place on the evening of the wedding-day, it was impossible to prevent his putting himself into a wheeled chair pushed by two chamberlains, and after this fashion following all the figures of the polonaise danced by torch-light. Fortunately, amusement rarely kills even old people, and the good Elector lived long enough for his envoy to be enabled to take part in the proclamation made on the 27th of January, to the accompaniment of popular acclamation and a salute of artillery, of Charles VII., King of the Romans, the first Emperor of Germany for centuries who was not a descendant of Rudolph of Hapsburg.[6]

This time, Belle-Isle was excusable for believing that he had passed into the ranks of great men, and for taking up a position before the eyes of posterity as the genius who had set the seal on the great destinies of the French Monarchy. It was with sincere enthusiasm that he wrote to the King himself. "Sire, success crowns your Majesty's enterprise, the perfection of this great work completes the glory of your reign, and secures the future and the repose of your kingdom."

To the Cardinal he gave some details which still further revealed his triumph: "I ought not to omit, to inform your Eminence," he says, "that, at the moment when the Emperor presented himself

[6] Tilly to Amelot, Mannheim, October 21, 1741—January 21, 1742. (*Correspondance du Palatinat.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

at the window of the Hôtel de Ville and showed himself to the people, boundless acclamation arose. I had the honour to be at a window with the Empress, who was there incognito. The Emperor, much moved by the acclamations and cries of joy, turned his eyes towards me, and raising his hand to the crown of Charlemagne, which he had on his head, he signified to me that to the King alone he owed the triumph he now enjoyed."

Belle-Isle, who even in the intoxication of success bore in mind what manner of man he was dealing with, did not neglect to furnish the account of the cost of this great achievement on the spot; he was well aware that its economy would enhance its merit.

"What has been promised," said he, "must be paid; 200,000 francs to the Elector of Mayence, with an abbey worth 25,000, 20,000 crowns to the minister, 2000 to the secretary, as much to the valet de chambre, and from 15,000 to 20,000 francs to the directory of Mayence. Never has so great an affair been transacted so cheaply." He did not add, however, that for fifteen days he had kept open house and free table; that all the Electors, in turn, came to sup with him, each accompanied by his suite, and that the newly-elected Emperor, with the Empress, had promised to do him a similar honour on the day of their coronation. Considering Belle-Isle's way of doing things, there was a supplement to the account in prospect, which Fleury, who was

a ready reckoner, could calculate with little difficulty.[7]

The Cardinal's answer to this letter, while it abounded in the warmest congratulation, allows his economical anxieties to be discerned. The autograph letter, it is true, contains admirably turned compliments only: "I made no doubt of success," writes Fleury, "but this is so great an event that it is difficult to be tranquil until all has been finished. The whole of the honour is due to you; you do not share it with any one; you are good enough to associate me with it, but I answer you as Charles IX. answered a consul at Guyenne who congratulated him upon the battle of Jarnac: he turned his back upon him, saying that apparently he took him for his brother the Duke of Anjou." But, in the ministerial letter of the same date, which accompanied this private note, the following final reflection tempers the praise: "We must now labour for peace, and endeavour that France, after so much pains, risk, and expense, shall also reap some advantage."[8]

Telegraphic communication did not then exist,

[7] Belle-Isle to the King, January 27, 1742; to Amelot, January 28. (*Correspondance de l'Ambassade à la Diète.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Belle-Isle to Fleury, January 12, 1741 (this date is manifestly erroneous). Ministry of War.

[8] Fleury to Belle-Isle, January 28, 1742; Amelot to Belle-Isle, January 28, 1742. (*Correspondance de l'Ambassade à la Diète.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

nor did news from all parts of the world, and repeated by a thousand newspapers, come in every day: to this politicians and diplomatists owed it that, after great events, they had a few moments in which to breathe, collect themselves, and even enjoy the legitimate pleasure of success. Had it not been for this happy impossibility of knowing everything (which I have had reason to envy more than once in the feverish precipitation of our contemporary politics), the pompous promises of Belle-Isle might have been much modified by certain unpleasant information that would have reached him from all the scenes of the military operations at the same moment, and the new Emperor would have been thrown into serious alarm for the security of his patrimonial States on the very day when he assumed his somewhat visionary dignity. This was, however, a reverse of the medal that Belle-Isle (although unaware of it) might very well have foreseen, for the unfortunate change was partly due to the state of confusion and moral weakness into which his ill-humoured attitude had contributed to throw the army when the command devolved upon Marshal de Broglie.

It might, indeed, have been foreseen that the taking of Prague, precisely because it had been sudden and easy, would, while facilitating everything, bring nothing to a conclusion. Not a drop of French blood had been shed, but neither had

any Austrians perished, and the troops of Maria Theresa, undiminished by a single man, were rather stunned than conquered. They retired southward of Prague for some weeks to Neuhaus, Budweiss, and Tabor, and they speedily rallied from their momentary demoralization, under the generous influence exerted over them from Vienna. Before the 1st of January, a fresh and double attack was arranged. The troops of Marshal Neipperg, commanded by the Grand Duke, were to descend the Moldau, and again to advance towards Prague, to surprise the outposts of the French army at Pisek, and harass its communications with the division which had remained at Linz, in Upper Austria, under the command of the Marquis de Ségur. The Ségur division itself, being thus isolated, was to be taken separately by a new corps, formed at Vienna, and commanded by Marshal Khevenhüller.

On the 26th of December, only a few days after the departure of Belle-Isle, Count d'Aubigné, who was detached in the advanced post of Pisek, was informed of the return of the Grand Duke in offensive form, and he, in great alarm, apprised Marshal de Broglie, who immediately proceeded to Pisek, and found that important point much dismantled, and the arrangements for defence very ill made. This was the opinion of D'Aubigné himself, who did not hesitate to express it freely to Belle-Isle, in one of those secret correspondences, which the

Marshal, with a complete disregard of discipline, was weak enough to countenance.

"The situation is very grave," wrote this general officer, on the morning of the 28th; "it is beyond a doubt that the enemy is stronger than we are, and that we are not at all in a state to parry what they may do against us. I shall regard it as a kind of miracle if we regain Prague without a check; I say more, that it is physically impossible the situation which is beginning can last three days. I acknowledge to you that Marshal de Broglie has undertaken the worst task which, perhaps, has ever been seen in war; and I believe it is impossible he can get out of it well, unless the enemy's generals are as stupid as pigs; and I protest to you, that if I had been a marshal of France commanding in Alsace, I would not have quitted that post to come here to ruin and dishonour myself; and there are several of us here who, without being as great or as good as he, would not be sorry to be anywhere else. I close this letter because the army of the enemy is down upon us. The Marshal is resolved to support Pisek at any cost, and he is right." [9]

D'Aubigné was well informed; even before he could finish his letter the advance-guard of the enemy was in sight, and the Grand Duke, relying

[9] D'Aubigné to Belle-Isle, Pisek, December 28, 1741. (*Correspondance de Bavière.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

upon the numerical superiority which was secured to him at this isolated point by the dispersion of the French troops, sent a trumpeter to summon the town to surrender. The Marshal, having collected all the detachments which were within reach by a rapid movement of concentration during the night, believed himself able to hold his ground, and, surrounded by his staff, awaited the arrival of the Austrian trumpeter, who was conducted through the town with bandaged eyes. The trumpeter proclaimed in a loud voice, according to orders, that the Grand Duke, being unwilling to shed the blood even of his enemies, but especially that of his subjects, warned the town that if it were not surrendered on the moment, all should be put to the sword. The trumpeter spoke in German; Maurice de Saxe, who was beside the Marshal, translated these threatening words into French as best he could.

"Answer," said the old soldier, "that I had expected the Grand Duke to entertain a higher opinion of the French nation, and the officers who have the honour to serve the King, and that if he attacks the town, these gentlemen who are here hope better to merit the honour of his esteem."

The Marshal then went in person to each of the gates of the town in succession, and placed the guard which was to defend it. In front of the principal gate the first columns of the enemy were

to be seen, at a distance of 500 paces. Turning towards the young Dukes of Luxembourg and Boufflers, who accompanied him, "Gentlemen," said he, "when men like you come so far to war, it certainly is with a desire to distinguish themselves. Do you wish that I should give you an opportunity to-day? It looks as if those people whom you see beyond there would not be slow to pay you a visit." "The two threw themselves into my arms," said the Marshal afterwards, in his despatch, "and I assure you truly that there is reason to believe they will follow in the steps of their grandfathers and fathers."

The defence thus strongly organized made up by its zeal for its inferiority in numbers ; an assault, which was attempted in the evening, was repulsed with loss, and the Grand Duke, astonished by a resistance which he did not expect, retired without repeating it.

"He had," says the despatch already quoted, "the disgrace of retiring, after a great deal of fatigue, just as he came." "In fact," adds the Marshal, "it was not without much trouble that I succeeded in placing the King's army in safety in an honourable manner, which has prevented the enemy from re-entering into the midst of Bohemia, and driving us in disorder under the walls of Prague, as they would have done, had I conducted myself otherwise than I have done—with which the general

officers and all the troops have appeared to me to be well content; at least, I like to think so."[1]

It was not without cause that Marshal de Broglie spoke with such reserve of the satisfaction of his officers and men; for almost all the officers of his staff, far from hastening to congratulate him on their common success when the affair was over, seemed to apprehend that any tribute they might render to the merits of the new chief would be taken as criticism of Belle-Isle. They seemed to be particularly anxious to avoid encouraging Marshal de Broglie to take his onerous command too seriously. The Major-General himself (or, as he was then called, the Marshal Quarter-master General) M. de Mortagne, carried this strange behaviour to a point which led to a very angry explanation with the Marshal; and it is an amusing fact that the same D'Aubigné whom I have quoted above, gave an account of this strange scene in a postscript to that identical letter, having apparently forgotten the beginning of it before he reached the close.

[1] Marshal de Broglie to Marshal de Breteuil (Minister of War), December 29, 1741. Ministry of War.

Almost all the despatches relative to this campaign which exist in minutes at the Ministry of War were published in the last century, by an inexplicable accident, in a collection in 1772, printed at Amsterdam, under the title, *Campagnes des Maréchaux de Broglie, Belle-Isle, et Maillebois, en Bohème et en Bavière.* This collection, which it is difficult to find in booksellers' shops, may be seen in most of our public libraries.

"The enemy have presented themselves and retired," he writes, "and, between ourselves, it appears to me this morning that the Marshal imagines he has won a great battle because of the retreat of the enemy. Last night he was quite persuaded that without him all was lost, he even had a set-to upon the point with M. de Mortagne, who spoke to him very well but very strongly, and made him see that by the orders which you had given before he arrived, we should have done the same thing as he has done, even if he had not come at all. I was not present during their conversation, but I was told that it was very formal in its terms, though brisk and sharp. I advise him not to talk in that sort of way before me, because I would not put up at all with his conquering airs."

Somebody interposed between the Marshal and his subordinate, and after an exchange of civilities, harmony was temporarily restored. This, however, did not prevent Mortagne from writing to Belle-Isle that, in order to make the whole truth known, he ought to have it stated in the *Paris Gazette* that all the successful and decisive measures had been taken by him before his departure, and that his successor had merely had to take advantage of them. "We sulked with each other all day," said he, in conclusion, "and in the evening he told me that he wanted us to be friends again. God be praised! he will never be M. de Belle-Isle for me."

Broglie, on his side, was not without defenders at Versailles. He had brought some officers with him who did not fail to sing his praises. "The enemy is covered with disgrace," wrote one of these, "and the Marshal with renown, by the orders that he has given, and by his successful disposal of the forces, which was the admiration of the whole army."

Fleury simply smiled on receiving all this contradictory evidence, and with his own hand wrote these words on one of the letters: "Idle words of little worth (*cancans peu utiles*)." He was right to regard this pitiful tattle with contempt, but he was wrong to forget that to such contemptible causes had been traced before then the ruin of an army and the misfortunes of an entire reign.[2] Those very persons who disputed the honour of his first success with the Marshal reproached him still more keenly with not knowing how to take advantage of it. It was, indeed, pretty generally expected that he would have come out of his lines himself and pursued the retreating enemy; and the same persons who had on the day before regarded the Grand Duke's army as invincible, now spoke of it as a flying mob. The Marshal, on the contrary, considered that the alarm had been sufficiently serious to serve as a warning, and feared the hardships of a winter campaign for

[2] D'Aubigné to Belle-Isle, December 28 and 29, 1741; Mortagne to Belle-Isle (same date); Champigny to Fleury (same date). (*Correspondance de Bavière.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Under this title two series of despatches are comprehended.

his troops, who were already greatly reduced by fatigue. He therefore resolved to fortify himself at Pisek, of which he made a sort of entrenched camp, intending to remain there, except in case of absolute necessity, until the summer. This decision, which he defended with haughty obstinacy against all the objections that were placed before him, may perhaps have been open to criticism, but the censors would probably have been less numerous if he would have consented to return in person to Prague, where the young officers who were with him would have found some amusement, and all the conveniences of life in a great city. He did not give them this consolation; but, on the contrary, as he was constantly afraid of a surprise, and did not wish his inaction to be taxed with weakness, he resolutely remained with his sons and all his people in the straggling village where they were rather camped than lodged, setting the example of enduring privations of every kind, including severe cold, with perfect indifference.

Nothing, as we know, is more opposed to the French temperament than calm endurance of suffering, and the patient support of trials more painful than glorious. There arose great murmuring, not indeed among the soldiers,—they admired their General for sharing their hardships—but amongst the wealthy and dissipated young officers, who recognized only two modes of pastime, pleasure and fighting; and Belle-Isle must have received more

than one confidential communication in the tone of the following, which is signed with the name of D'Aubigné: "I will tell you, that as much as I desired to be employed somewhere while the troops remained in winter quarters, I now desire to re-enter Prague. It does not suit me at all to remain at Pisek, which is an abominable quarter during winter. I might perhaps find some solace if I were under your command, but I shall not seek for any with this man. At Prague I can lead the kind of life that I like, and if you came there I should be sure to see you, which is not a matter of indifference to me."

Some appearance of justice was lent to the reproach of inertness and immobility brought against the Marshal, by the alarming position in which the French division left upon the Upper Danube speedily found itself. The Austrians, relinquishing the idea of forcing the Marshal in his Bohemian positions, but on the other hand under no apprehension that he would come out of them, were at liberty to make their principal effort. While the Grand Duke's army, entrenching itself in a series of strong places (Iglau, Neuhaus, Budweiss, and Tabor), formed a sort of barrier which closed the communication between Bohemia and Upper Austria, Marshal Khevenhüller, sheltered behind it, commenced the attack. His corps, which was destined by Maria Theresa to reconquer the most ancient portion of her hereditary possessions, had

been formed with special care, at Vienna, by herself and under her own eyes. It had at first been composed of 12,000 men, but she had raised the number to 16,000 by adding Hungarian levies and troops recalled from Italy, while Ségur commanded only between 8000 and 10,000 men. The Marshal was an old comrade of Prince Eugene. The day before that on which he was to leave the capital, the Queen sent him a portrait of herself with her little son in her arms, accompanied by an autograph letter, which was read out in presence of the troops.

"Dear and faithful Khevenhüller," thus ran the Queen's letter, "you have before your eyes the image of a Queen abandoned by the entire world, and that of the heir of her race. What is to become of this child? It is for you to answer that question. His mother confides to you, as to a faithful minister, all that she possesses of strength and power. Act, then, O hero and faithful vassal! according to the account which you will have to render to God and to man. Take justice for your buckler; do what you think just; be pitiless towards perjury; follow the example of your glorious master who is in the bosom of God; and merit all the favours of our royal gratitude for yourself and your family, and at the same time immortal renown before God and before the world. May God give you life and strength in battle."[3]

[3] D'Arneth, vol. ii. p. 9.

Khevenhüller proved himself worthy of the Queen's confidence from the very first encounter. Ségur, who was astonished to find unexpected ardour and numerical force in troops who were believed to be intimidated and demoralized, rather precipitately abandoned the positions which he occupied upon the river Ens, and retired into Linz, where before long he was blockaded. He sent despatches to Prague asking for assistance, and at the same time gave notice at Frankfort of his dangerous position. In response to his appeal Marshal Torring collected the Bavarian troops that were in Prague, and set out to his assistance. The road was, however, long and difficult, all direct communications being interrupted and only by-ways open, so that it was doubtful whether these insufficient supports could even arrive in time. There was only one operation that would have been really efficacious: a powerful attack directed against the battle-front of the army of the Grand Duke, to force it, or to cut through it, and fall on the rear of Khevenhüller, at the moment when he commenced the blockade of Linz.

De Broglie by no means refused to undertake the adventure, notwithstanding his desire to risk nothing during winter; but the success of this attempt would be very doubtful if the French army had to undertake it alone, and could be rendered certain only by the co-operation of all the allied

forces, that is to say, by the participation of the Prussian army.

Was Frederick in a humour to consent to this? He did not seem disposed to do so, and in any case Marshal de Broglie could not flatter himself that he would have sufficient influence over the King to bring him to a decision.[4]

The Marshal had, indeed, refused for some time to believe what he had been told of Frederick's inveterate dislike of him, and the resentment which their unfortunate interview at Strasburg had created in the King's mind. He had even replied somewhat pompously to those who told him to be on his guard, that he had been intimately acquainted with more sovereigns than one, and always succeeded in meriting their esteem.

The rumours which reached him on all sides, however, soon forced him into a less confident attitude. He was obliged to acknowledge that his presence at the head of the French army had, for some reason or other, thrown Frederick from the first into a state of nervous irritation, which, far from subsiding,

[4] Marshal de Broglie to Marshal de Belle-Isle, and the Marquis de Breteuil, January 15, 1742. Ministry of War. Frederick pretends in his *Histoire de mon Temps*, and all French historians have repeated it after him, that a joint operation of the nature which I have just indicated had been proposed by him and refused by the Marshal. No trace of either the proposal or the refusal is to be found in the French or Prussian Correspondences which are now published.

was daily increasing. The King pretended, with all the seriousness in the world, that the appointment of a general of whom he had once in his life had to complain was a direct and premeditated offence against his person on the part of the French Cabinet. No one could pronounce the name of the new French commandant before him without throwing him into fits of passion, and he himself could not utter it without the accompaniment of one of those insulting and indecent epithets of which he possessed an inexhaustible store.

"It would be enough," writes Valori, "to let the King of Prussia perceive that Marshal de Broglie might derive any advantage whatever from any course of action, even the most advantageous that could be adopted, to secure his immediate refusal to adopt it." [5]

This persistent resentment for so frivolous a motive is very surprising in a mind so essentially practical as that of Frederick, who, as he despised all men about equally, did not in general waste his time in either hating or loving them. A sagacious observer would have discerned, I think, that calculation rather than genuine wrath was hidden under this mock anger.

In reality, it was not the arrival of De Broglie that irritated the impatient monarch, it was the

[5] Valori, private letter, February 18, 1742. (*Correspondance de Prusse.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

departure of Belle-Isle. It was Belle-Isle whom he regretted, and whom he wanted to have under his hand again at any cost; Belle-Isle, the inspirer of the war; Belle-Isle, who was ready to make every sacrifice for the success of an enterprise on which he had staked his honour; the author of the Prussian Alliance, who was bound to put up with everything from the friend whom he had secured, so that he might not appear to have been his dupe. From another general, one less prepossessed in favour of an enterprise which would not be his own, Frederick could expect neither the same complaisance nor the same credulity. He had a hold on Belle-Isle, and he did not want to relinquish it.

From the day on which Belle-Isle departed and Broglie succeeded him, Frederick's very moderate inclination to come to the aid of his allies after the taking of Prague was again suddenly checked; he profited by the confusion of the Austrians to take possession of Olmütz and Glatz, almost without striking a blow, and then he set off for Berlin, to attend the wedding of one of his brothers. On his arrival there he gave himself up entirely to the business of the interior administration of the kingdom, appearing to occupy himself no more with the events of the war than if he were not interested in it, except when he bitterly and disdainfully criticized the measures that were taken in his absence. "I set out to-morrow for Rheinsburg," he wrote to

Voltaire on the 3rd of January, "to resume the crook and the lyre, and please Heaven, never again to lay them down."

It was in this pastoral retreat that a very pressing letter from Charles Albert, soliciting him to do all in his power to help Ségur, and prevent the invasion of Bavaria, which must occur if Linz were obliged to surrender, reached the King. This letter was accompanied by one from Belle-Isle to the same purport, and the latter was written at the request of Broglie himself, who being unable to act personally at Berlin, had not hesitated to have recourse to the Marshal's good offices. Belle-Isle complied with the wish of his colleague, but at the same time apprised him that there was no counting upon the *docility of the Prussians*.[6]

There was, however, no knowing what to expect from Frederick. Contrary to the general apprehension, far from requiring further solicitation, he not only complied at once, but went beyond what was asked of him. He had only been pressed to send a single corps with one of his superior officers, but he declared that he would take command of the operation himself, and that, as he required Saxon troops, he would immediately ask the King of Poland to lend him their assistance. He even requested Valori to proceed to Dresden several hours in advance

[6] Marshal de Belle-Isle to Marshal de Broglie, January 9, 1742. (Ministry of War.)

of him, so as to prepare the way for the communications that he had to make.

When this generous resolution became known it created uniform admiration, and twenty letters were immediately written to Frankfort, Prague, and Linz, sounding the praises of the hero who sacrificed his ease, and exposed his life to risk, for the welfare of his allies. Valori only betrayed some uneasiness, for he did not clearly understand the mission which he was about to undertake, and considered that his heavy person was disposed of rather too cavalierly. The very inadequate explanations vouchsafed to him by Frederick increased his anxiety, as they led him to foresee difficulties of more than one kind. "I want the command," said the King to him, "because your Marshal de Broglie does not please me;" and then a few words about the direction which the projected expedition was to take added to his perplexity. Just before he stepped into his carriage he wrote to Belle-Isle in these words: "All this requires a great deal of reflection, but, to make representations and explanations, one must have a prince to deal with who will listen to you; now this one says, 'I beg you will bear so and so in mind,' and then he leaves you there. This has been his method with me at Charlottenburg, and he was in such a hurry to make me set out, that, although he sat down to table himself, he did not give me any dinner. . . . It is the fact, monseigneur, that I

have to start to-night on this fine negotiation. I have to prepare in five or six hours' time without knowing how far the King will lead me. It is impracticable to follow a sovereign who, having no equipment at all, does not care what becomes of a minister in his suite. Again, he wrote to his Minister: 'I cannot tell you all that I suffer from this commission. I foresee a great deal of difficulty from the King's dislike of Marshal de Broglie. M. de Belle-Isle is the only one who could manage this prince, who may be on the eve of doing terrible things. Do not suppose that any one can reply to what he says. However right one may be, he goes on talking vehemently and decisively, and leaves you to your reflections, which are not always to his advantage; but there is nothing to be done except to give way to him."[1]

Valori was not mistaken; the interview which he was going to arrange at Dresden turned out in fact a very stormy one, and was painful to him in particular.

The first day after the arrival of the King of Prussia was passed in fêtes and display of every kind; banquet, ball, and theatrical performances succeeded each other. The frivolous Augustus III. spent money lavishly, rather to display his own grandeur than to do honour to his guest. But,

[1] Valori to Belle-Isle and Amelot, January 16, 1742. (*Correspondance de Prusse.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

on the following day, Frederick demanded a conference, to be attended by Augustus, his minister Count Brühl, General Rustowski, commandant of his troops, his brother Maurice de Saxe, who had come expressly from the French camp, Valori, and Desalleurs, the French Minister at Dresden, who were the two representatives of France, and, finally, Marshal Schmettau, a superior officer who enjoyed the personal confidence of Frederick.

Before this areopagus, all listening to him with profound attention, Frederick laid a plan which had absolutely nothing in common with the general expectation. He proposed, not to charge upon the centre of the army of the Grand Duke, so as to open up the road to Linz, but, on the contrary, to take that army in flank on its right, and make himself master of the fortified town of Iglau situated at the entrance of Moravia. That town having been taken, and the Austrian troops left on one side, he proposed to dash into Moravia and march straight upon the Lower Danube, and even to Vienna, if it were necessary. "It is not to be doubted," said Frederick, "that the Queen of Hungary, threatened in her capital, would instantly recall either the army of Khevenhüller or that of the Grand Duke, and perhaps both, to defend it. In one or other of these hypotheses, either Linz would be disengaged, or Ségur could be aided by De Broglie's army."

Then, after he had explained this daring project, supporting it by strategic reasons of indisputable force, and with eloquent precision, he added, as if it were a foregone conclusion, that unfortunately he could devote only a small portion of his own troops to the enterprise. It would, then, be necessary that all the Saxon troops should be placed under his orders, and also that division of the French army which was commanded by Count Polastion, and was nearest to the approaching scene of strife, that is to say, to the city of Iglau. It was of course understood that he should have the sole and absolute command of these auxiliary forces, without any control by Saxon or French generals, "For," he added, "you are aware that the King of Prussia cannot command as a subaltern."

Consternation was depicted on every face, and the embarrassment of all present was increased by the difficulty of explaining the motive of the general surprise. The idea in itself was a tempting one, and worthy of a great captain; but it was the postscript that spoiled all, it was this uncontrolled command—this free commission to dispose of the men and money of others—demanded in so imperious a tone, and by whom? By the very person whose conduct had excited just suspicion; who had recently allowed an enemy's army to escape safe and sound, as the result of a clandestine transaction; and who had been saved from being caught *in*

flagrante delicto of treachery, only by the surprise of Prague. Who could be sure that what he had done yesterday, he would not do to-morrow? Who was to say that if he had once set out in this unknown direction, out of reach, and out of sight, he would not, should Maria Theresa come to meet him with proposals that would suit his views, stop to treat with her to his private advantage, while leaving the troops confided to his charge to shift for themselves as well as they could, at fifty leagues from their base of operation? At the mere idea of delivering himself over, tied hand and foot, to a neighbour whom he had always detested, King Augustus remained open-mouthed, hardly daring to breathe; Valori and Desalleurs exchanged glances of alarm, asking themselves what Marshal de Broglie, thus unceremoniously deprived of the right arm of his force, would think of so novel an amputation.

It might be supposed that these suspicions were conceived only by over-timid imaginations, only that Frederick himself seems to have evaded his own complete justification.

"The Moravian expedition," he says (in his "Histoire de mon Temps"), "was the only one which under the circumstances could be undertaken, because it rendered the King more necessary, *and placed him in a position to be sought by the two parties.* The King determined upon it, being at the

same time resolved to employ *only as few of his own troops as possible*, and as many of those of his allies as they would give him.[8]

It would be difficult to understand why, in the course of a warlike expedition, he wanted to be sought by the two parties, unless it were to secure to himself the power of treating with one by abandoning the other to its evil fortune; and as for the strange precaution of employing *as few of of his own troops as possible*, why should he thus limit his stake, unless for the purpose of leaving all the risks of the operation to his allies? Lastly, it is again Frederick himself (and the recently published correspondences confirm this avowal) who informs us that, at the very moment when he proposed this chivalrous expedition, he was arranging communications at Brunn, the chief place of the province which he was about to enter, with a Tuscan canon of the name of Giannini, a particular acquaintance of the Grand Duke, through whom he was to receive such secret intelligence as that prince might wish to convey to him.[9]

The silence was broken by Maurice de Saxe. He opposed the proposed project of diversion with reasons which he put as strongly as possible, but not one of them was the true, nor the sound reason. He

[8] Frederick, *Histoire de mon Temps*, chap. v.

[9] Frederick, *Histoire de mon Temps*, chap. v.; D'Arneth, chap. ii. p. 472 and following. "Pol. Corr.," vol. ii. pp. 34, 35, 71 and 72.

specially insisted upon the danger of diminishing the strength of the French troops, already reduced by fatigue and sickness, while in the vicinity of the Grand Duke. He dwelt upon the difficulty of procuring the necessary provisions for so distant an expedition through countries ravaged by armies, or so hostile that local resources could not be counted upon. His double rank, as a Saxon prince and a French general, and the fame he had gained by the brilliant adventure of Prague, lent authority to his words which might compete with that of Frederick himself; the latter replied point by point, "doing," as he said himself, "the quack doctor, and puffing his wares as much as possible." In the course of the discussion he said, hastily, that the spirit of Marshal de Broglie, who was always ready for inaction and retreat, was plainly to be discerned in the difficulties which were created for him. Maurice took this up very warmly. "I do not know," said he, "whence this idea comes. At Pisek, a few days ago, the Marshal was the only one to hold firm, when all the rest wanted to let go. He is a thorough soldier."

Frederick, who was much annoyed, said, turning towards the French envoys, "And you, gentlemen, what do you think about it? are you not of my opinion?" Valori did not speak a word. Desalleurs, who was bolder, replied: "I think, sire, that the Marshal will execute your Majesty's orders, now that he is ac-

quainted with your talents, better than he received you, when he had the misfortune not to know your Majesty."

The discussion was going on without reaching a conclusion, when the King of Poland was informed that he was waited for at the Opera, at which Faustina, a celebrated Italian singer (who had been brought there for the occasion), was to sing. The meeting was broken up for this important reason, and adjourned until the following morning. Frederick agreed to the delay with a smile, and even assumed a disguise and danced at the masked ball, which followed the opera, on the same evening. He afterwards recorded that the delay suited his purpose, because he took advantage of it to address himself, in the morning, to the real director, not only of the conscience, but of the policy of Augustus, Père Guarini, to whom he declared that he would be entirely guided by what he should say. "The pride of the Italian," he says; "was flattered, and he readily triumphed over the scruples of his penitent."

That Guarini was consulted by Augustus is possible, for it was usual, but, in any case, he yielded only to a reason which would have exerted its effect on other minds as well as on that of a monk. This reason was an ultimatum put by Frederick with determination that forbade reply; the thing was to be taken, or to be left. "After all," said he, "for my part, I already have what I want, and what

suffices me, and I fight no more for others; let those who want Moravia take Moravia."

Every one gave in to the inevitable, except Maurice, who still insisted upon the necessity of procuring supplies for the army, and affirmed that M. de Séchelles, the French commissariat-agent, who was then at Prague, would be unable to meet the requisitions which would have to be made.

"I shall see to that myself," said Frederick; and the following day he set out for Prague, taking Valori, who was quite confounded, with him.[1] At Prague he met the commissariat-officer himself, and putting him under examination, questioned him closely as to what foundation existed for the fears expressed by Maurice de Saxe. His imperious demand already assumed the form of a requisition, and to the first observation which was made to him upon the danger of pressing the population too severely, he replied, "It is the kingdom of heaven which is gained by meekness; the kingdoms of this world must be taken by force."

Séchelles was an able commissariat-agent who

[1] Valori, *Mémoires*, vol. i. pp. 138—140. Frederick, *Histoire de mon Temps*, chap. v. Desalleurs to Amelot, January 28. (*Correspondance de Saxe.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Droysen, vol. i. pp. 394 and 395.

These various anecdotes of the Conference of Dresden differ on more than one point; Droysen has combined them with considerable skill, and I habitually adopt his version.

piqued himself on surmounting difficulties: "I will render the impossible possible," said he. The particular difficulty in question was indeed not invincible, since it amounted only to subsisting until the entrance of Moravia had been forced. Once in that province, whose resources were intact, the war could sustain itself for some time. Frederick obtained all the promises that he desired; the last obstacle was removed, and he set off immediately to the rendezvous which he had assigned to the allied troops.[2]

Through all these comings and goings, there was but one person who had not been consulted, and who indeed had hardly been informed of the matter; this was the commander-in-chief of the French army. Marshal de Broglie had, nevertheless, sent one of his officers to Dresden to thank Frederick for his intervention, the nature of which he had not at first been able to divine. But no sooner had he learned, on the return of his envoy, that the purport of the King's action was not to come to his assistance, but to dismember his army, in order to carry away one portion of it out of his sight and from under his command, than his displeasure and surprise became extreme. He lost not a moment in making his mind known to Valori. Nothing would have been more easy than to summon the Marshal himself to the Conference at Prague, Pisek being only a few

[2] Séchelles to Marshal de Broglie, January 21, 1742. Ministry of War.

hours from the capital; but Frederick had taken good care to ask nothing of the kind, and if Valori thought of it, he had been deterred by fear of the conflict which might result from the interview. In short, the result was that the Marshal learned simultaneously that the King of Prussia had come, without notice, to within three hours' distance from his camp to give orders to the French commissariat-agent, and gone away again, making no sign, to place himself at the head of the French army.[3]

A more enduring spirit than that of the Marshal might have lost patience, but it must be acknowledged that he was not even wanting in that virtue, for he confined himself to addressing a respectful letter to the King of Prussia, in which he expressed his regret at having been unable to receive him. Then he severely admonished Séchelles, and bitterly complained to Valori of the ignorance in which he had been left.

The Marshal, to avoid a rupture, did not forbid Polastion to take part in the expedition against Iglau, but he formally enjoined him after the surrender of that town not to take a single step upon the soil of

[3] Valori maintains in his *Mémoires* that Marshal de Broglie had given his consent to Frederick's plan, and only withdrew it upon the advice and under the instigation of Maurice de Saxe. The correspondence of the Marshal makes it evident, on the contrary, that he withdrew his consent (which he had eagerly given) so soon as he knew that Frederick's design was to march on Vienna, and not to come to his aid in fighting the Grand Duke.

Moravia, which could remove him farther from his own chief and his base of operation; at the same time he expressed a hope that the King, being better advised, would then himself consent to retrograde and go with him to confront the army of the Grand Duke at Neuhaus. Lastly, to secure himself against being taken by surprise this time, he detached the Count de Saxe from the Prussian camp, and charged him with the superintendence of the execution of his orders. Having made these arrangements, the Marshal remained in a state of extreme irritation and anxiety, which was speedily aggravated by very bad news from Upper Austria. He learned successively, that Torring, being met by the Austrian troops before he had gained Linz, had been put to flight; and that Ségur, no longer expecting aid, had been obliged to capitulate. His troops came out of Linz with the honours of war, but had been obliged to pledge themselves to serve no more in Germany. The Grand Duke, whom Khevenhüller, as a delicate attention to Maria Theresa, had summoned at the last hour, had arrived in time to receive the submission of the town in person and make a triumphal entry. Bavaria was then open, and Khevenhüller was free either to penetrate into it at his pleasure, or to retire upon Vienna without losing an inch of the conquered territory, and thus the diversion meditated by Frederick was deprived of a portion of its advantages.

Frederick, on being informed of this check, would not renounce a military project which had taken his fancy. Hardly had Iglau yielded (this was the affair of only a few days), when he again announced his intention of pushing on through Moravia in the direction of Vienna. Polastion was therefore obliged, much against his will, to exhibit his orders to return (Frederick was, however, already aware that they had been given), and to proceed to their execution. The anger of the King was unbounded, and he displayed it with his usual violence. M. de Broglie was nothing but a traitor, and the French were cowards who deserted him before the enemy. His unbridled speech in these fits of passion was unfortunately encouraged by the weakness of Valori, who, although he secretly condemned the King, allowed himself to be carried along with him, and also by the regrets of the young French officers, whose imagination was captivated by the hope of taking part in a brilliant expedition. "I have not failed," wrote Valori to Polastion himself, in a private note, "to tell the King your grief, and that of all the officers left under your command, at being obliged to obey orders which were dictated by intrigue and issued by feebleness."[4] Then he endeavoured, in indirect terms, but evidently by the inspiration of the King, to find out whether Polastion would consent to elude or adjourn the fulfilment of

[4] Valori to Polastion, February 10, 1742. (*Correspondance de Prusse.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

his instructions; but Polastion, although he allowed himself to murmur, would not disobey. The Count de Saxe, besides, who was watching him closely, would not have permitted any hesitation on his part.

The King was obliged to let him go, but gave him a note for the Marshal, couched in these disdainful terms: "Sir, I send you back M. Polastion and his troops; according to what you tell me, that you have the orders of the King of France to retire them to you. I do not enter into discussion of the fact, and I do not pretend to comment upon the ill grace there is in retiring troops when allies are marching upon the enemy. The fact will swell the history of all this ill conduct, and will not fail marvellously to animate my zeal for the common cause."[5]

The French being gone, and the enterprise having consequently lost all chance of success, the Saxons, who had been associated with it against their will, thought only of getting away also. They soon received formal orders from Dresden to withdraw, which had been urgently solicited by Maurice, and began at once to prepare for their retreat. Hereupon Frederick burst into a fresh storm of fury, and then ensued explanations of an exceedingly animated kind, between the irritated sovereign and Maurice de Saxe. In the eyes of Frederick, Maurice was no

[5] Valori to Polastion, February 10, 1742. (*Correspondance de Prusse.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "Pol. Corr.," vol. ii. p. 35. Frederick to Marshal de Broglie, February 11, 1742.

better than a perfidious ally, unworthy of the race from which he had sprung, and who was selling his country to France. He despaired of intimidating the Count de Saxe, but he would at least endeavour to withdraw the two Saxon generals, Rustowski and the Chevalier de Saxe, who were, like Maurice himself, natural brothers of Augustus III., from his influence. He took them apart several times to represent to them in urgent and flattering terms that the King of Poland had only one thing to do, namely, to throw himself into his arms, and turn his back on the French. "Let us leave the French to make war in Bavaria," said he; "let them make their blunders there, let them be beaten, we have nothing to fear. I will add 15,000 men, and some thousands of hussars to the troops of your master, and we will easily find means of getting the better of the enemy together. You must either be my friend, or that of the French. If I am not satisfied with you I will arrange with the Court of Vienna."

During this time, poor King Augustus and Count de Brühl at Dresden, assailed by conflicting entreaties, no longer knew which to listen to. Maurice and Broglie entreated them not to yield, *and not to put their sheep into the power of the wolf.*

Belle-Isle, on the contrary, wrote to them from Frankfort that nothing could be more imprudent than to anger Frederick by vain cavilling. The only means, he said, of turning the King of Prussia

from his designs, was to yield to him in appearance, and trust to making the difficulty of their execution evident to him afterwards. "It is thus," he added, "that I myself have always managed him."

It remained to be seen whether this expedient had succeeded so well as he thought. After much hesitation, the Court of Dresden, following the usual course of feebleness, yielded to the most immediate danger, that is to say, to Frederick's threats, and was induced to repeal all its first orders. The Saxon generals received permission to follow the King of Prussia whithersoever he chose to lead them. When Maurice was informed that this counter-order had been issued, he was seized with consternation, and made answer to his brother simply in these words: "You have no longer an army." To Broglie he wrote, "It is all over. France has no more allies, the King of Prussia hates you, and wants to get you beaten; and," he added, "I warn you of this, because your fat Valori seems to understand nothing that he hears; this, however, does not prevent his eating and drinking as much as usual." [6]

Maurice was in too great a hurry, and the moment

[6] Belle-Isle to Desalleurs, February 11, 1742. (*Correspondance de Saxe.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Belle-Isle to Amelot, February 4 and 10, 1742. (*Correspondance de l'Ambassade auprès de la Diète. Mémoires de Marshal de Belle-Isle.* Maurice de Saxe to Broglie, 1742. (Ministry of War.) Vitzthum, *Maurice de Saxe. Lettres et documents inédits tirés des Archives de Dresde,* pp. 225 and 440.

when his prediction was to be verified, although it was coming, had not yet arrived. Frederick was now ready enough to recognize that even with the assistance of the Saxon troops, who were discontented at being towed in his wake, his plan, whether ill or well conceived at first, could no longer be carried out as he had hoped.

The terror which he had calculated upon producing at Vienna by his daring march had not been created. It was not easy to intimidate Maria Theresa, especially when she was receiving such good news as that of the capitulation of Linz and the successful operations of Marshal Khevenhüller. A few thousand men, whom that General could send back to her without even being obliged to suspend his march on Munich, would amply suffice to defend the capital against a surprise. Frederick himself would soon be threatened in Moravia by the incursions of wild bands, furnished by the Hungarian "insurrection," and who had not yet been incorporated into the regular army.

In order to defend himself he had to detach a portion of the forces whom he had destined for the invasion of Austria, upon the frontier of Hungary. From that moment he turned his thoughts to finding a pretext for retreating; but he had to contrive one of a nature to enable him to cast all the blame on his allies, according to his usual custom. He soon and easily found such a pretext.

He gave orders to the Saxon troops to lay siege to Brunn, a chief place of Moravia. As a regular siege had not been contemplated in the original project, the artillery required for an operation of this sort was of course not at hand. Frederick asserts that he demanded it from Augustus, who replied that he had no money with which to procure artillery, although he had purchased a large diamond on the day before, for the sum of 400,000 francs.

Augustus III. no doubt did wrong in expending his money on trifles, but we cannot see how all the treasuries of the world could have called up heavy artillery from the ground, and placed it beneath the walls of Brunn in time. It is, therefore, more than doubtful whether Frederick really intended to take possession of that town; nevertheless, if he renounced the project the fault was to be laid at the door of Augustus. "Crowns are only conquered with big guns," said Frederick jeeringly; and he repeated, "If any one wants Moravia, he must know how to take it." At the same moment, Marshal de Broglie gave notice that a movement of the Austrian army seemed to be threatening Prague, and that the despatch of a reinforcement to that city would be necessary. Frederick did not believe this (he says so himself), but he adds, "The King pretended to believe the false announcement, in order to get rid of suspicious allies."

He dismissed the Saxons, whom he had done so

much to retain, without ceremony, and, complaining that he was abandoned by everybody, returned to Bohemia to take up his winter quarters.

In this backward march he was pursued by the maledictions of the people, whom his troops had shamefully harried. ("Since the Goths," wrote Valori, "never was war seen to be made after such a fashion.") The King himself was gloomy and irritable, and constantly indulged in invectives against the human race. Nobody dared to tell him that his failure was the natural consequence of his strange device, which, according to his own acknowledgment, had consisted in seeking fame by leaving its cost to his allies, and displaying audacity, indeed temerity, at the risk and expense of others.[1]

The freak, which had no result in a military point of view, had in the meantime embittered and revealed the dissensions which already existed between the various representatives of France in Germany. Belle-Isle's having taken the side of the King of Prussia, at the moment when Broglie was complaining loudly of him, was the signal for a dispute which instantly divided both diplomatists and military officers. The friends of Frederick, with Belle-Isle, Valori, Mortagne, D'Aubigné, and Polastion, and all the young officers—his opponents, with Broglie,

[1] Frederick, *Histoire de mon Temps*, chap. v. "Pol. Corr.," vol. i. pp. 80—180, *passim*. Valori to Amelot, April 14, 1741. (*Correspondance de Prusse.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Desalleurs, and Maurice de Saxe—formed two camps which daily fell foul of each other. It was an open quarrel everywhere, and at all the officers' tables; and a dispute raged as to whether the misfortune of Linz had been caused by the inertness of the old Marshal, who had not succoured the town in time, or the blunder of the young King, who had gone to a distance in search of adventures.

At Frankfort the dispute was not less angry than at Prague or at Dresden. The Emperor, who was peacefully disposed, although entirely on the side of Belle-Isle, and who trembled before Frederick, was made wretched by these dissensions, and vainly endeavoured to heal them by fair words: "I wish I could be cut in two," said he, "so that I might not be divided from any one." [8]

The grief which this caused, added to his despair at seeing his kingdom of Bavaria invaded, brought on a severe attack of gravel, which rendered it impossible for him to be present at all the fêtes of his coronation, and, in particular, at that which Belle-Isle gave.

The foolish and unmeaning splendour of this entertainment was overcast by a feeling of general uneasiness, and very sad foreboding. Belle-Isle himself, in spite of his natural confidence, could not conceal his anxiety; it was depicted on his face during the whole of the festivities.

[8] Charles VII. to Fleury, January 30, 1741.

The fact was, this invasion of Bavaria, which it had been impossible to prevent, coming so close upon the accession of the sovereign of that kingdom to the Empire, exposed the essential vice (or, as Saint-Simon would have said, the hollowness) of the enterprise in which Belle-Isle, after having engaged his country, was exhausting all the courage, talent, and life that remained to himself. It could not be more clearly proved that the imperial dignity, denuded of the support of effective power, had merely a surface brilliancy. This Emperor, without soldiers, without money, without genius, wandering about outside his own States, was nothing but a lay-figure, adorned with a stage crown, unable to stand erect, and tumbling with all his weight upon those who had set him up. A clever saying is never wanting among the French to depict a situation to the life. The nickname, *Jean Sansterre*, which was bestowed by a wit on Charles VII., had a great success in Paris. A more acute jest, and one more acceptable to German taste, was the following, which circulated in Frankfort: a medal was struck, with the image of the Grand Duke on one side, and with the inscription: *aut Cæsar aut nihil;* on the other that of Charles VII. with the same device modified: *et Cæsar et nihil.*"

Belle-Isle, in his double capacity of godfather and guardian, felt that he had a share in the jeers which were addressed to his ward.

It was in the midst of this general disenchantment that bad news arrived successively at Versailles and Paris from all the correspondents of the army, first of the taking of Linz, then of the incidents of Moravia, and the rumour of the quarrel of the two Marshals, and their mutual recrimination. The correspondences of the camp, indeed, from whatever side they came, were all melancholy and foreboding. The war which had fired so many youthful spirits had fulfilled the hopes of none of them. There had been dreams of summer campaigns on the banks of the Rhine or the Po, with easy returns and ready communications, and carriers going to and fro every day, carrying gazettes, gossip, and love-letters. The facts were a winter sojourn in a desolate region, under an inclement sky, where the troops were either floundering in mud or blockaded by snow. The young officers had flattered themselves that they were about to fight in the presence of the King himself, and in the company of the Princes, taking the intrigues and the pleasures of the Court with them to the army; but who could now think of risking the precious life of the sovereign at such a distance? Again, only yesterday all was supposed to be over; to-day, everything had to be begun over again; everybody complained, and the only subject of dispute was, who was in fault? It was not surprising that parties should be divided at the Court, as well as at

the camp, and that the grievances of Belle-Isle met with less consideration than he expected, while the complaints of his successor received more support and were echoed more widely than he himself had anticipated.

It must be borne in mind, besides, that at Versailles one single subject of paramount interest eclipsed all others at that time. The only question now occupying all minds was, what would happen when Providence should at length see fit to subject Fleury, like all other mortals, to the ordinary course of nature, that hitherto appeared to be suspended in his favour?—when that always expected and ever deferred event, which any one might have learned on getting up in the morning without surprise, should have occurred, into whose hands would the administration of the royal power fall? Everything was in that; every other matter, whether it were political, military, or social, was judged from the single point of view of the effect which might result from it at the critical moment. Now, so long as Belle-Isle had been sailing before a fair wind, and that fortune seemed to respond to every appeal of his, he was the designated successor of Fleury, and the conduct of all was regulated in accordance with that future prospect.

No sooner, however, did the Marshal's star seem to wane, than other names found utterance, and other ambitions awoke. The former Minister,

Chauvelin, who was still in exile, was spoken of; and also Cardinal Tencin, a prince of the Church like Fleury, and renowned as an able ambassador, and whose advent to power would have had the advantage of creating no change. It would not even have affected the exterior appearance, or so much as the robe of the Prime Minister. Things of this sort were already being said in a whisper, when the disasters in Germany furnished a pretext for discussing them aloud.

From day to day, in proportion as the number of Belle-Isle's rivals and secret enemies increased, did De Broglie, for the sole reason that they who spoke well of him depreciated his adversary, find new defenders, who were equally unexpected and self-interested.

The strength of the two parties to this conflict, which became the great affair of the day, and had important consequences, was almost equal. Marshal de Broglie had on his side nearly all the ministers and place-holders, who were not afraid of any competition on his part, but regarded Belle-Isle as a future master whose accession would mean new faces, and fresh appetites to be satisfied. He was, moreover, supported, in addition to his personal relations, by the numerous friends (of both sexes) whom Maurice de Saxe had left at the Court, and whose enthusiasm the ardent Saxon kept up by an unflagging correspondence.

The absence of discipline among the officers, the impropriety of their way of talking about the General, the duplicity of the King of Prussia, and Belle-Isle's obstinate credulity, were all subjects that lent themselves easily to the passionate and eccentric language in which Maurice de Saxe habitually indulged. On the other hand, Belle-Isle was not without champions, for he continued to be the hope of all those "non-contents" who took pleasure in imputing the misfortunes of the war to the faults of the superior administration, and this class is always more numerous, in every country, than that of the "contents." He also had his correspondence, which for raciness might compete with that of Maurice; it consisted of letters addressed to him by Frederick, full of cynical epigrams against Broglie. These epistles, although confidential, were habitually permitted to circulate in the cafés of Paris and in society. This was an indiscretion which, though it always caused surprise, was invariably committed.

Influence, which was but the stronger for being of the gentler kind, was also exerted in favour of Belle-Isle; whether present or absent he was never forgotten by the select coterie to whose society the King resorted, every evening, to forget awhile the cares of State and his domestic worries. It is true that the marshal's chief patroness, Madame de Vintimille, no longer figured among the favoured number; she had recently died in her

confinement, to the great grief of the King. Madame de Mailly now reigned alone. She was handsomer, but less clever, and less ambitious than her sister, and her empire was only that of habit, which, in relations of this kind, is not far from satiety; but all the power which her charms still retained were placed at the service of her absent friend.

Belle-Isle's interests were promoted with equal fidelity by a great lady of a very different character, the much esteemed Countess of Toulouse, widow of one of the legitimatized sons of Louis XIV., who enjoyed well-merited consideration at Court, and disposed of all the influence of the powerful house of Noailles, from which she came. Her good sense, upright mind, sound judgment, and perfect tact, were greatly valued by the King. It is true (for I must be candid here, and the fact faithfully depicts the manners of the time) that he was also grateful to her for abstaining from carrying her strict propriety to the point of a rupture with Madame de Mailly, and for allowing her apartment at Versailles to be used pretty frequently for supper-parties, at which she could not, by the utmost stretch of charity, believe that her own conversation was the sole attraction.

Between these rival armies, thus maintained upon a war-footing, the old Cardinal wavered in a state of uncertainty, now bitterly reproaching Belle-Isle in his own mind with having involved him in

an interminable enterprise, anon recoiling from the thought of separating himself from the only man who, after having got him into the scrape, would be able to get him out of it; not free, probably, from a suspicion that it was, in reality, the succession to his own post which was being disputed under cover of another cause, and not at all sorry to keep all the pretenders to it busy; in a word, trying, according to his custom, to get out of the affair without displeasing anybody, so as to live, and, when at length it should become unavoidable, to die, in peace. The uncertainty in which he left everybody was so great, that frequent attempts were made to ascertain his real sentiments through Barjac, his valet, who thus became a power to be reckoned with. Barjac was said to be favourable to Marshal de Broglie, and I have, in fact, seen letters addressed to him which came from the staff at Pisek.

Each of the two Marshals had, in addition, an appointed agent, whose business it was to keep them informed of every incident, and to watch especially over their interests; and, by a singular coincidence, each had found the required person among his nearest relations, and precisely of the same degree of kindred. The Chevalier de Belle-Isle, being sent by his brother to make known the result of the election at Frankfort, was informed of the underhand work that was going on, and took

up his post at Court as a sentinel. His letters, which were deposited, with all Belle-Isle's papers, at the Ministry of War, bear witness to the vigilance with which he discharged his duties as a close observer. It is, however, difficult to recognize and assign their names to the principal personages on whom the two brothers bestow concerted nicknames in this curious correspondence.

On the very day of his arrival, the Chevalier relates that he has been received by the King with open arms and a smiling countenance; also by the Cardinal and all the ministers; but that it is Madame de Mailly who has asked him to supper; then he adds a postscript, which shows that, although barely arrived, he had lost no time. "M——, with whom I have already had some conversation, is more persuaded than ever of the ill-will of the ministers, without exception; he tells me, that the *greffier* (I have reason to believe that this is Amelot, the Minister of Foreign Affairs), when supping some time ago with M. d'Aiguillon, said, 'It is time to put an end to the prestige of M. de Belle-Isle, to unmask him, and show that he is by no means what he is believed to be;' and that M. Orry (Comptroller-General) himself said to him that he looked upon M. de Broglie as the only real military leader there is in this country, that this was the reason why he had advised that he should be sent into Bohemia. M—— said very marked things to me

about other Ministers, and he added, 'There are moments when *Muret* (this is certainly the Cardinal) allows himself to be led away.' "

Some days later he is received by *Muret* himself, who begins despondingly upon the topic of the perfidy of the King of Prussia. "He said to me that this man was difficult to catch and to hold, and that you were the only one who could get the better of him. I acknowledged that he was a difficult man to handle, one who piqued himself upon having his own opinion and sticking to it, and that he was actuated by confidence in the one, and aversion for the other, but that with the perfect knowledge which his Eminence had of his character, his Eminence must feel that he had only to be handled with gloves on as one handles the bundles of briars one uses to stop a hole. This expression made him laugh, and he agreed that it was a necessity. 'And then this election,' said the Cardinal, sighing, 'it is capital, of course, but after all it is only a shell, and we shall have to furnish it.'"

To all these indiscretions respecting the Cardinal, the Chevalier added a bulletin of his health, which was no less interesting. "*M. Tapone*" (I do not know who this was) "ardently desires that you should come, for the tidings from Linz are very cooling, and he seems quite convinced that *Muret* will not last beyond Lent; he is fading away visibly. The nourishment which he takes (for he can no

longer bear meat) passes at once, almost without digestion."[9]

It was also his brother, and a most devoted one, that curious personage whom a few years ago I presented to the public of our time, whom Marshal de Broglie had selected as his correspondent. Those who have done me the honour to read *Le Secret du Roi*,[1] and who do me the still greater honour to retain some recollection of that work, are aware that the Abbé de Broglie, known at the Court, and in all the Memoirs of the time, by the name of the *Grand Abbé*, was a strange ecclesiastical character, who respected the letter of the duties of his state, while absolutely disregarding their spirit, and of whom President Hénault drew a portrait in two words, which I have quoted. "He was," says the President, "intriguing without ambition, and indecent without immorality." I have added that, although his intellectual ability and his habitual unscrupulousness were not employed either for his own advantage or for his personal pleasure, both were freely used to serve the interests of his family. In the present case he was especially careful not to neglect them, and they could not have been in better hands. From the Abbey of Vaux in Cernay, quite

[9] Chevalier Belle-Isle to his brother, January 28, and following days. (*Correspondances diverses.*) Ministry of War.

[1] Translated from the French under the title of "The King's Secret."

near Versailles, of which he was the titular superior, and where he sometimes thought proper to make long retreats, he contrived to be kept informed in good time of all that was passing at Court, and he was at hand in case his presence should be required.

On the very day when his brother had been sent into Bohemia, he had begun to take the field on his own account, but he knew those with whom he had to deal too well to expect that either the King or Fleury would ever take a determined and decisive line; so that, far from sowing discord between his brother and Belle-Isle, he had at first done everything in his power to prevent its arising. When, however, he found that he could not succeed in this, he employed all his skill in endeavouring to persuade Fleury that these dissensions were the doing of subalterns and subordinates, who might readily be set to rights, and that nothing would be easier than to bring the chiefs to a lasting agreement; only, he said, the work would have to be divided between them, the diplomatic responsibility being left to the one, the military operations to the other; the balance being equally held between *the conqueror and the negotiator.*

For the better securing of the equity of this distribution of parts, he endeavoured to obtain, either for his brother or for his nephews, similar tokens of the royal confidence to those which had been heaped by Belle-Isle's contrivance on himself

and his relatives. These are the tactics revealed by his various letters to the different ministers, copies of which were regularly sent either to the Marshal himself, or to Madame de Belle-Isle, who remained at Strasburg. These singular letters are flavoured with a mixture of shrewd reflection, unexpected remarks, pious comment, caustic sarcasm, passages of Scripture, and rather broad jokes, which had earned for the Grand Abbé the reputation of the most amusing of talkers, but the most dreaded of critics.

We can fancy we hear him, for instance, remind Orry, the Comptroller-general, of the deplorable condition in which his brother found the army of Bohemia. How careful he is, while defending one of the Marshals, never directly to throw the blame of the errors that have been committed upon the other, and to account for them all by the long absence of Belle-Isle, and the incompatible requirements of the double task which he had assumed. "His Eminence," says the Abbé, "orders my brother to place himself at the head of the army of Bohemia; he sets off with due obedience, but he is not so blind as not to know all the danger. Nevertheless, he goes, notwithstanding the severity of the season, without equipages, and without any convenience; he enters Prague by horrible roads, and finds a dispersed army, wanting provisions, in scattered quarters, and he is unable to succour it. M. de

Polastion is on the march on one side, M. de Ségur on the other; in a word, the army is dispersed without rhyme or reason. Whose is the fault? God knows! I do not. There are only two things which I do know perfectly; one is that my brother cannot be blamed, for he was at Strasburg, nor can M. de Belle-Isle, who has not the faculty of presenting himself in two different places at once. I venture to observe, as a country philosopher, that I have never read in history of its being possible to command an army at Prague from Frankfort, unless, indeed, M. de Belle-Isle, surpassing St. Peter, can work miracles by his shadow at two hundred leagues' distance. And why," he adds, "has M. de Belle-Isle succeeded in the election? Simply because he was the only person who meddled with it. And yet," he continues, "the worth and the merit of my brother are coldly praised. The Cardinal must have had a singular esteem for him to have laid so heavy a task as this upon him, without tendering him some alleviation. Work, fellow, work! pass nights and days in repairing other peoples' faults; receive letters which require you to do impossibilities; march with allies who do not obey your orders; suffer still more from the ignorance of friends than from the superiority of enemies; and nothing shall be done for you, nor even for your sons who distinguish themselves! By my faith, this is treating my brother like a black, and not like a man of his rank;

it is turning the Marshal's baton into a stick to beat a slave withal."[1]

At the same time he strove, no less assiduously, to calm the feelings of his brother and sister-in-law, and to prevent them from ruining all by exaggerated alarm and over-vehement complaint.

"The language in which you think, and which you speak, is all right for your brother the Abbé, and he sees nothing to blame in it. He thinks just as you do, and when he can speak to you, he will speak as you do; but, unfortunately, you and he are not the public, and the public does not think with you and him. It is true that the soundest part of the Court, beginning with the Cardinal, is disabused of the magnificent ideas of Marshal de Belle-Isle and his favourites. This is exactly true. The town, and people who are not sold to the cabal, think likewise; but the news-spreaders are pensioners, and talk according as they are paid, while we pay no one. You have to deal with two sorts of persons: the Ministry and the public. I divide the public into the gossiping and the judicious; the gossiping are against us, the judicious are for us. As for the Ministry it is all one, it sees that your conduct is so simple and so moderate, so full of candour and of truth, that of others so distorted, so false, and so presumptuous, that you are under

[1] The Abbé de Broglie to Orry, Comptroller-General (Family Papers).

no greater obligation to the Ministers for protecting you, than the Ministers are to you for your mode of action. Be firm then, without being petulant, oppose artifice with straightforwardness, and let no hasty or offensive word escape you. Make use of iniquity to prepare the ways of justice, pray to God to support you, and offer all your troubles to Him. *Salutem ex inimicis nostris et de manu omnium qui oderunt nos.*"[3]

Belle-Isle, being informed of the active operations which were going on against him, at length resolved to go in person to Versailles at the beginning of March, there to plead his own cause. The authorization to quit his post was granted to him, but unwillingly. Nothing is more trying to the timidity and irresolution of people in power, than the necessity of listening to passionate explanations and making explicit answers.

Thus, the Marshal's first reception by the King, as well as by the Cardinal, was constrained, cold, and marked by an air of embarrassment which interested spectators might readily take for a sign of displeasure. He wished to be heard at once, but, in order to gain a few hours, and spare himself one evening of annoyance, the Cardinal replied that he was setting out for his country house at Issy, and that he would see him there on the following day. This was equiva-

[3] The Abbé de Broglie to the Marshal, February 13 and 25, 1741 (Family Papers).

lent to telling Belle-Isle that the King would not be present at their first interview. No more was needed to spread the rumour of the Marshal's disgrace throughout Versailles on the instant, and from thence to the cafés and theatres of Paris. So effectually was this done, that an accident to his carriage having delayed his return to the hotel, it was immediately reported that he had been arrested and sent to the Bastille.

Belle-Isle faced the storm bravely; he reappeared on the following day with an unembarrassed manner, saying to all comers, so as to be heard even by the attendants, that they might do with him what they would, but that he himself would not consent to return to Germany, if it could be doubted for a moment that he still possessed the entire confidence of the King.

Audience was at length granted him, and before all the ministers. It lasted no less than four hours. "Belle-Isle," said D'Argenson, "was Gulliver in the Council of Liliput."

The Cardinal would have been glad to cut short the conversation, and once more get out of his difficulty by vague politeness and airy compliments; but Belle-Isle would have none of that sort of thing, and in spite of his Eminence he entered upon a justification of himself, point by point, which was in reality a temperate but very distinct recrimination upon the faults, the delays, and the indecision of the superior

administration, whose chiefs were then present. "I, myself," he says, "made all the objections which I knew were made to me, and so I got them into a dead-lock.

"It was with great anger and impatience that the Cardinal listened to what I had to say respecting the calumnies of the public. The Ministers, not knowing what all this meant, and for whom these signs of ill-humour were intended, did not venture to say much in reply. At last the Cardinal, who could not conceal his annoyance, terminated the audience, saying that it was for the person who had conducted the whole business to say what was necessary to lead it to success."

Notwithstanding this favourable presage for Belle-Isle, he was kept in uncertainty for some days longer, during which time Madame de Mailly was knocking at every door in tearful emotion, and exhausting herself in invectives and protestations against the ingratitude of man, and the injustice of which so great a servant of the state was the victim. "While I was staying at the house of Madame de Luynes," said Belle-Isle, "Madame de Mailly, who had been sending in search of me everywhere, came there, only half awake, to greet me. It is impossible to describe her excitement, and how loudly she declaimed to all comers against the gossip and the gossip-mongers." As a matter of fact, the lady carried her exuberant zeal to the extent of

forcing an entrance into the Cardinal's room at the hour when he habitually took some rest. This she did to the great displeasure of Barjac, who vainly tried to keep her out, and who heard her, from the inner room where he remained, talking in a loud, declamatory tone, and even caught some of the exclamations which she uttered.[4]

At last the resolution which had been come to by the ministers in council, but was rather submitted to than taken by them, was publicly announced. It was, like everything that emanated from Fleury, a compromise. A fresh force was to be directed upon the Rhine to procure the evacuation of Bavaria; its command was to be entrusted to Marshal de Broglie, who was to quit the army of Bohemia and leave Belle-Isle to resume the command of it. The generals would thus be separated, without either of them being able to complain that he was sacrificed or subordinated to the other. This arrangement had, moreover, the advantage of bringing Belle-Isle, whose absence he regretted, nearer to the King of Prussia, and sparing him from contact with De Broglie, whom he could not endure.

Belle-Isle, if he did not suggest it himself, willingly accepted the decision. "At any cost," said he, "I would not have wished to have the command of the army of Bohemia. It consisted of troops whom I

[4] *Journal d'Argenson*, vol. v. p. 6. *Mémoires inédits de Belle-Isle.*

do not know, formed by strange general officers; and thus I should have found myself in bad company on one side, and with entirely new faces on the other, while M. de Broglie would have remained with my true and first army." Nevertheless, to make it evident that it was he who carried off the victory, he demanded and obtained the favour of the erection of his estate of Vernon into an hereditary dukedom.

On the evening when this royal favour was announced, the news was rife at the Cardinal's *coucher*, but he did not seem inclined to speak of it; after some minutes of silence he said at last, in a low voice, "Madame de Mailly will have been very glad." The next day, on meeting the young Duc de Chartres, who exhibited some surprise, he said, "What would you have? It was absolutely necessary to send him back; nobody but he knows how to lay hands on anything." But, at the same time, he wrote a letter to Marshal de Broglie which Belle-Isle, again using his habitual expression, calls "unctuous" to excess. In explaining to him why he removed him to a distance from the King of Prussia, he drew so unflattering a portrait of that sovereign, that De Broglie was enabled to exclaim, in reply, "It is the King himself, Rigault could not have painted him better!"

A few days afterwards, the news of the taking of Egra, a strong place in Bohemia, which was rapidly

carried by assault by Maurice de Saxe, reached Versailles. This was an important victory, because the French army recovered a more free communication with the Rhine on that side; moreover, it was one of those operations commanded by Marshal de Broglie which both Frederick and Belle-Isle had severely criticized. Count de Broglie, who had taken part in this brilliant feat of arms, was sent by his father to Versailles, to carry the colours taken from the enemy. Fleury displayed the greatest joy, and causing the young officer to be ushered in at once, he presented him to the King, who embraced him with the words, "I make you Brigadier."

If the desire to please constituted the whole secret of the art of governing, Fleury would have lacked no requisite for a great minister.[5]

[5] *Mémoires inédits de Belle-Isle. Mémoires du Duc de Luynes*, vol. iv. pp. 104 to 112 and 111. D'Argenson's *Journal*, vol. iv.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DEFECTION OF FREDERICK.

Frederick's ill-humour on his return to Bohemia—Causes of his displeasure—He purposes to make a final peace with Austria—He sends for the English Envoy to come to Breslau and treat with him—Lord Hyndford's hesitation—The proposals which he transmits to Vienna are repelled by Maria Theresa—Frederick resolves to attack the Prince of Lorraine, in command of the Austrian army—Battle and victory of Chotusitz—Frederick does not pursue the vanquished Austrians, and re-enters into negotiations with them on the day after their defeat—Belle-Isle arrives at Prague—He finds Marshal de Broglie, who is afraid of being crushed by the junction of the Austrian troops, in a state of great anxiety—The two Marshals jointly attack Prince Lobkowitz—Fight and victory of Sahay—Belle-Isle waits on Frederick, and tries to induce him to act in common with the French army—His interview with the King: he cannot obtain a promise of immediate action—News of the junction of the Prince of Lorraine and Prince Lobkowitz—Belle-Isle goes to Dresden to obtain the aid of the Saxon army—Broglie, forced to retire before the united Austrian troops, precipitately re-enters Prague—Last interview of Frederick and Valori—Fleury's despair—Disastrous effect of Frederick's defection upon France—Displeasure of the French public—Voltaire congratulates Frederick—His letter is intercepted and published: he is obliged to deny it—The motives alleged by Frederick to justify his defection examined—Conclusion.

BELLE-ISLE, setting off again for Frankfort, prior to assuming his new post, did not fail to make Frederick

aware, in all the pride of his triumph, of the arrangement of things which he boasted of having brought about, and which, he believed, would be agreeable to the King. It is, however, doubtful whether Frederick, receiving this information at the same moment that he himself was leaving Moravia in some discomfiture, found it sufficient consolation for his own disappointment, or even a source of unmixed satisfaction.

Never, on the contrary, had his temper been worse than it was immediately after his return to his Bohemian quarters. Valori, although well accustomed to his freaks, was frightened at his state of mind, and, with less than his usual acuteness, he attributed the King's sudden fierceness and sullenness to the remorse which a sovereign ought to feel for having imposed the miseries of a campaign, conducted with merciless rigour, upon a harmless population and his own army, to no possible advantage.

"His look," wrote the deeply-moved ambassador to Belle-Isle, "is that of a reprobate." Long afterwards he says in his Memoirs: "I then saw what a frightened conscience can make of a man's mind. The King's state was terrible. All his sayings were hard, his laugh was forced and sardonic, and his jests were full of bitterness. Everything wearied and worried him; above all, everything aroused suspicion in that tormented mind. What had I not

to suffer!"[1] Valori did far too much honour to Frederick's conscience; neither on that nor on any other occasion did it trouble him. I might furnish a proof, if any were wanting, that scruples had no share in his perturbation, by a little anecdote which Valori himself is careful to relate. Some depredations of the Saxon army in Bohemia being indignantly referred to in the royal tent, Frederick angrily exclaimed, "What do you think of those fellows! I never could succeed in making them pillage in Moravia, no matter what I said to them about it, and here they are, now, pillaging in a country which they ought to spare!"

The true cause of his irritation was, firstly, the annoyance of having failed in an attempt about which he had talked very big, and secondly, the prospect of a fresh campaign. The approach of summer would shortly necessitate this, and it would have to begin under conditions much more distressing to the allies, and much less profitable to himself, than those of the preceding year. The gallant spirit and the confident bearing of the Austrian troops revealed the effect of the success which they had just achieved. Their confidence was revived by the honour of having, within two months' time, forced the French to capitulate and Frederick

[1] Unpublished Memoirs of Belle-Isle. Valori, *Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 154. Valori to Amelot, April 30, 1741. (*Correspondance de Prusse.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

to fall back. The Grand Duke, satisfied with having taken an apparent part in this triumph, yielded up to his brother Prince Charles of Lorraine a command of which Maria Theresa began to fear (although she would not acknowledge it) that he was decidedly incapable. Much, perhaps too much, was hoped from the talents of the new General, whose good looks, elegant figure, and polished bearing contrasted with the haughty and awkward manners of the Grand Duke. The army which he was to lead was in an excellent position. The main body, on the frontier of Moravia and Bohemia, faced the Prussians encamped at Chrudim. On its left, an important division, under the command of Prince Lobkowitz, and supported on a chain of fortresses, continued to bar the direct road from Prague towards Upper Austria against the French army. The Austrians, on the contrary, had their communications free on all sides, with Vienna and the Lower Danube, as well as with Khevenhüller, who was still master of Bavaria.

This military advantage, which Frederick might readily trust his own genius to defeat, was, however, nothing in comparison with that which Maria Theresa derived from the revolution wrought by two long-expected events, that altered the whole balance of forces in Europe, to the advantage of the Queen. New parliamentary elections had brought about a change of ministry in London. Walpole found himself obliged to retire before a hostile

majority, and the chief grievances alleged against him were the feeble aid he had lent to Austria in her peril, and his more or less suspected connivance in the neutrality observed, and the vote given at Frankfort, by the Elector of Hanover (King George). Lord Carteret, his successor, assumed office with a distinct pledge that English policy should take a more active part in the conflict in which the continent was engaged. The subsidy granted by parliament to Maria Theresa was renewed and increased, and the 12,000 soldiers who had been promised to her, but for whom she was still waiting, were placed at her disposal. In addition to all this, the Government sent an Ambassador-Extraordinary to solicit similar action from the States-General of Holland. There, too, as well as in England, the public mind was roused to excitement by the phantom of French ambition, while courage to brave it was inspired by our reverses.

At the same moment, the Court of Turin, at the other extremity of Europe, resolved, after a whole year of preparation and hesitation, to abandon its enigmatical attitude. It took part, if not for the rights of Maria Theresa, at least against the claims of Elizabeth Farnese. The co-operation of Spain, so eagerly offered at Munich, also turned to the disadvantage of those who had accepted it without reflection. For, hardly had the Spanish troops who were disembarked upon the coasts of

Tuscany at the end of December touched the Italian soil, than Charles Emanuel declared that, his rights being at least equal to those of the Infantes, he could not tolerate a fresh establishment of the House of Bourbon in Italy. By a treaty, drawn up with great ability, he pledged himself to Austria to defend the Milanese against the Spanish invasion, reserving for the future the examination of his own rights and all the litigious questions. Maria Theresa, thus secure of being protected in Italy without striking a blow, was enabled to recall to her side all the troops whom, but for this support, she would have been obliged to devote to the preservation of her ultramontane provinces. It was, indeed, owing to the confidence which she derived from a negotiation already commenced that she had been able to reinforce Khevenhüller's army in time by regiments brought back from Italy. The loss which she had sustained at St. Petersburg was more than made good to her by these unexpected auxiliaries, coming from the west and the south.

The consequence of this double tacking round was, in fact, to extend the area of the conflict (which had been until then restricted to Germany) from one end of Europe to the other. No sooner were France and England at loggerheads, than the Netherlands, Southern Germany, and Northern Italy would become a scene of strife. Fighting would be going on simultaneously on the Danube, the Rhine, the

Meuse, and the Po. On that day Frederick would find not only those Rhenish possessions which he had not renounced, threatened, but, probably, also his patrimonial State of Brandenburg, which lay open to the English troops on the Hanoverian side. Fresh perils had to be incurred and new efforts to be made on these various points of the horizon. A less selfish policy than that whose maxims he professed would have been disturbed by such a state of affairs, for it is easily to be seen that the prospective increase of trouble had no corresponding augmentation of profit to offer to Prussia and its sovereign. According to the distribution of the interests of the allied powers, and the allotment assigned to each with his consent, Frederick had nothing personally to expect from the future strife. Silesia was completely subjected, and had even been morally ceded for an instant by Maria Theresa. Prussian blood would therefore have to flow for nothing more than the securing of the conquest of Moravia, which was promised to Saxony, and the possession of Bohemia, which was disputed with Bavaria. In the game, always one of chance, to be played on the battle-field, Frederick had no longer any gain to expect on his own account.

And yet, being the man we know him to have been, the having to incur barren risks for the profit of others, was not the prospect he shrank from most; another thought, another fear disturbed him

to a degree beyond his control. He was not strongly attached to any of his allies; but, as he feared Saxony and Bavaria little, he cared for them least of all. His real concern, his first care, was France. Now, from the moment that the war, crossing the frontiers of Germany, became European, the leading part upon the widely extended stage would indisputably belong to France. As it was the greatness, almost the existence, of France that was at stake, so it was her supremacy that might be the result of victory. Frederick felt that by this fact alone, he was relegated to the rank of a mere auxiliary; he was no longer, as it were, anything but one of the factors in an operation whose product would belong to a power which he had never liked less than since he had fought by its side. In a word, instead of his employing the French arms in his service, as he had always sought to do, and had hitherto succeeded in doing, it was now France who was about to use, and, perhaps, at the last moment, to baffle him.

This terror of being the instrument first, and finally the dupe of French policy, seems, from that time forth, to have actually haunted him; signs of it are to be found in every page of his correspondence, and it even deprived him of the practical good sense that was his chief quality. His continual suspicions, which at first appeared to be mere pretexts, now finding expression in his private and confidential

communications with his ministers, assume a character of sincerity. Judging others by himself, he is for ever thinking that he is coming upon traces of some deep design at Versailles such as only he himself was capable of, to be carried out by those arts which were familiar to him. Everything alarms him; the presence of a Saxon Envoy at Paris means that there is a plot to change the conditions of the treaty of partition to his detriment; the efforts of the French Minister at St. Petersburg to effect a reconciliation between Russia and Sweden are the preliminaries of a coalition formed in the North against him; something said by Cardinal de Tencin to the Pope, with the intention of reassuring his Holiness concerning the consequences of the conquest of Silesia by a Protestant prince, is an attack in anticipation upon the obedience of that province; a Frenchman residing in Tuscany, who comes to Vienna on his own business, is the bearer of a clandestine peace. There is nothing, not even the augmentation of the French troops, so often urged by Frederick himself, that, on certain days, he does not take to bear a threatening interpretation. It is on indications of like importance, that he directs Chambrier, his Minister at Paris, carefully to sound (*genau sondiren*) what the Cardinal has in his mind; and so zealously does Chambrier execute his instructions that the Cardinal, who is greatly annoyed by this spying system, takes

offence at last, and the King himself is obliged to moderate the inquisitive ardour of his envoy, and to recommend him "*not to ferret so much*," at least ostensibly.

Fleury had a good right to complain, for in supposing him to be so intriguing and so ambitious, Frederick gave him at once more and less credit than he deserved. Now that all the archives are open to us, it is exceedingly curious to compare the restless jealousy of the Prussian despatches with the totally different kind of solicitude that pervades those of the French Minister. In the latter one sentiment only reigns; it is the fear of displeasing a distrusted but necessary ally, to whose least caprices he renders humble and timid submission.[2]

Still, if Frederick had been the only person who chafed against the French alliance and hated France, he might, perhaps, have calmed himself down, and recovered patience. But the same impression was spread, as we know (he had given Valori an early warning of it), throughout his Court and among his immediate surroundings. Those who were about the King of Prussia, were all English, Russian, even Austrian, everything except French. The war, which had been entered upon with reluctance, became a heavier burden at each step, and after every incident. It was, indeed, to please his officers

[2] "Pol. Corr.," vol. ii. pp. 13, 15, 23. Droyson, vol. i. pp. 382, 385, 386. Vincent to Amelot, February 17, March 16, 1741. (*Correspondance de Vienne.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

that Frederick indulged in those invectives against our generals and our troops which it was impossible he could believe to be justified by facts. But, after the rout of the French at Linz, this wordy consolation was no longer sufficient. National pride, German patriotism—sentiments which were still groping about and ignorant of themselves, but which were revealed by vague instincts—were gratified by the spectacle of the standard of the lilies put to flight by soldiers who spoke German. There was murmuring in the Prussian ranks because this satisfaction could not be loudly expressed; Khevenhüller was an object of envy. If another such incident were to occur, the chances were that Maria Theresa would become the heroine of every man's imagination, even of those who were marching against her troops. And, at the same moment, in every town in Holland, and in many of the petty States of Germany, the Protestant pulpits resounded with invectives, launched by preachers who were the sons of refugees from the wars of religion, against the successor of Louis XIV., the Antichrist and helper of the devil, the new Xerxes, the oppressor of the liberties of the Christian republic. Frederick, anti-Catholic though he was, shuddered as the echoes of these imprecations reached his ears. With ever increasing dismay, he felt himself pledged under false pretences to a struggle henceforth without an issue, against passions which he probably shared, and whose

strength, in any case, he measured with sufficient correctness to make him feel how necessary it was to procure their support. Added to all these causes of dejection and impatience, there was another, derived from a lower source indeed, but which had quite as much power to disturb him. He was beginning to want money; his father's savings were almost entirely exhausted, and this was the moment at which the new Emperor, who had come to the end of his resources, asked him for considerable pecuniary aid, in the form of a loan, or subsidy.

Such were, beyond all doubt, the real reasons of the strange disturbance that Valori observed, to his great surprise, in that gloomy face, which long habit must have taught him to read so clearly. From this impatience to the desire to get rid of an importunate alliance there was evidently only one step. If Frederick delayed to take that step, if he hesitated to recur to the idea of treating directly for peace with Maria Theresa, on which he had so often dwelt, it was because he was ashamed to run after negotiators whom he had so recently dismissed, and afraid of encountering none but incredulous faces, were he again to offer to pledge a word which he had so lightly broken. He also supposed, and not without reason, that the Queen, being encouraged by her recent success, would now be more exacting with respect to the conditions of an arrangement.

These contending feelings led to a condition of

prolonged debate with himself, which he felt constrained (probably as the result of a sleepless night) to set down in writing. The time and place have now come for the insertion in my narrative of a curious document revealed to us by the Political Correspondence. This paper has neither date nor signature, and had it emanated from any other person, it might be called an examination of conscience.

The document is divided into two parts, respectively entitled as follows:—

"*A Statement of the Reasons which I may have for remaining in Alliance with France.*

"*A Statement of the Reasons which I may have for making a Peace with the Queen of Hungary.*"

The for and against is laid out before us; the whole soul of the writer is revealed. Under the first head (and even in the first rank), he thinks proper to place a consideration of honour and morality among the number of the motives that militate for the maintenance of the French alliance. "It is ill-done," he says, "to violate one's word without reason, and up to the present time I have no ground of complaint against France nor my allies" (this acknowledgment is precious and worth retaining). "If one does not carry out one's projects, and passes often from one side to another, one gains the reputation of vacillation and levity."

Reflections of a more self-interested kind follow;

as, for example, that a fresh victory gained over the Austrians would place Prussia in the first rank in Europe, and that the King of Prussia would then have *all the authority of the Emperor, while the Elector of Bavaria would have only the trouble;* and that the Queen of Hungary (if she were treated with) would always regret the ceded provinces, and would endeavour to retake them, so that there would never be anything more than a *plastered-up peace.*

It is, however, under the other head, that which enumerates the possible advantages of a separate peace, that the true sentiments of the writer are to be found. First come the usual denunciations of the slowness, the hesitation, the military mistakes of the French generals, and the impossibility of campaigning with them any longer without sharing the consequences of their errors. Then come complaints that to work for the King of Poland is only to aggrandize neighbours who may repay service by ingratitude. But now let us note the final trait; "The fortunate termination of this war, would render France the arbiter of the universe." This is the final word; this is the last figure of the reckoning, and it strikes the balance and settles the account.[3]

Frederick's self-communing bore its fruits, and he came easily to a conviction towards which passion already inclined him. Almost at the same time,

[3] "Pol. Corr.," vol. ii. pp. 98 and 99.

there came overtures from London, which had been made by the new English Secretary of State to the Prussian Minister in that capital. The consequence was that, on the 22nd of March, Podewils was instructed to request that Lord Hyndford would again repair either to Olmütz or to Breslau, there to treat, not this time for a truce and a hope of negotiation, but for a definite peace, on the basis of the following conditions. Lower Silesia to be ceded, within almost the same limits which had been indicated in the protocol of Klein-Schnellendorf, but with the addition of Königgratz, a "circle," and Pardubitz, a "seignory" of Bohemia (observe that these territories were at that very moment occupied by the allies, and ceded to Bavaria by a treaty of partition, which Frederick had signed hardly three months before). In compensation, the Queen of Hungary was to enter, in general terms, into an engagement to give *a reasonable satisfaction* to the allies of the King, and to accept the mediation of the maritime powers for the conclusion of a treaty of peace, in which all the powers should be comprised. In thus extending the conditions which he had obtained at Klein-Schnellendorf under more favourable circumstances, Frederick could only have had one purpose; that of leaving a wider margin to negotiation—if he began by demanding more, it was that he might obtain as much. He declared to Podewils, nevertheless, that these pro-

posals constituted an ultimatum, from which he would not depart.[4]

To the great displeasure of the King, Lord Hyndford did not seem to be at all in a hurry to respond to the invitation: too short a time had elapsed since the English Envoy had been duped, and he did not care to incur the risk of being again placed in the same position. He was well aware that a similar sentiment could not fail to be entertained even more strongly by Maria Theresa, and he discerned nothing of a nature to dissipate it in the King's proposals. The first outburst of feminine anger was not pleasant to sustain, as Sir Thomas Robinson had experienced, and Lord Hyndford, like a good colleague, was anxious not to subject him to it anew. He, therefore, put off his journey under various pretexts, and one half of the month of April had elapsed while the date of his coming still remained unfixed. Frederick's impatience hourly increased; summer was approaching; Belle-Isle announced his speedy arrival, and might make his appearance unexpectedly at the Prussian camp: it was necessary to decide on how he was to be received.

The unfortunate Podewils, who was at his wits' end, received letter after letter pressing him to put

[4] "Pol. Corr.," vol. xi. pp. 84 and 85. I do not know whether these instructions are placed in the correspondence before the undated document, which I have analyzed. It is however evident that the deliberation must have preceded the decision.

the irons in the fire. "The more I think about it," wrote the King, on the 31st of March, "the more I see that I must have a prompt peace at any cost;" then a few days afterwards: "As I am extremely puzzled how to see clearly into the present circumstances, so as to regulate my measures thereupon, I beg of you to press Hyndford on every side to see what I may allow myself, and how far I may go. Spare nothing on couriers to keep me informed, and make use of all your eloquence to persuade him to get our morsel for us, and that as quickly as possible. Fifteen days sooner or later means much in the situation in which I am, and I must know what I have to count upon before Belle-Isle arrives."

The King's private secretary, an individual named Eichel, who was a witness of this state of agitation, wrote confidentially to Podewils: "His Royal Majesty is in the greatest suspense to know what you are about, and as your Excellency knows the hastiness of our gracious master, and that, when an affair is languishing and dragging (*languissant tractiret oder trainiret wird*), he can adopt a different plan with the same hastiness, especially when so insinuating a man as Belle-Isle is coming with his cajoleries and promises, I also ardently desire for my own little sake that the affair in question should be speedily settled." [5]

[5] "Pol. Corr.," vol. ii. pp. 98, 116 and 117.

At last, on the 17th of April, Lord Hyndford arrived at Breslau, and Podewils hastened to engage him in conversation; but the interview did not advance matters much. The Englishman was cold, reserved, and ironical; every word he spoke and even the tone of his voice seemed to convey his perception that there was an intention of playing upon him, and that he was not in the humour to allow himself to be caught this time. He said, besides, that his full powers had expired, and he did not know the intentions of the Queen, not having had any communication with her since the unfortunate issue of the last conference. This ignorance on Lord Hyndford's part was scarcely probable, and it was easy to see that he knew more than he admitted, by the decisive manner in which he expressed himself upon each of the conditions of the proposed ultimatum. He did not spare any one of them; according to him, the Queen, who had consented to the mutilation of Silesia, would never submit to an encroachment upon Bohemia. Moreover, what was the meaning of that *reasonable satisfaction* to be secured to the allies of the King, but whose nature and extent were equally undefined? Whence was this satisfaction to be derived, if not from fresh sacrifices to be imposed upon the Austrian possessions? Who was to be commissioned to decide upon what was *reasonable satisfaction?* So elastic a clause could be nothing more than a

deliberate, ready-made mode of once more breaking a pledged word.

Podewils, who was piqued and disconcerted, endeavoured to justify himself and to retaliate, but without being at all offensive in his reply. He even admitted, with great frankness, that the stipulated clause in favour of the allies of the King, was no more than a polite method of getting rid of them, and that it was not to be taken seriously. But the conversation suddenly took an angry tone, when Lord Hyndford added, as a matter of course and a foregone conclusion, that, if the Queen were to decide upon yielding such fair provinces, she reckoned securely that, in return, the King would not content himself with remaining inactive, but would aid her by effective assistance to reconquer the rest of what she had lost. This was saying very plainly that Frederick's pledged word was worthless; that actions must be added, and blood put between him and his allies of the day before, in order to make sure that he would not on the morrow hold out his hand to them behind backs. The Prussian Minister then rose in anger: "My Lord," said he, "if the Queen has allowed such an idea to enter her head, it is useless for us to talk any longer. The King is not going to war for her with the Emperor, with France, and with the King of Poland. War for war, he would prefer to carry on the present one briskly; for, so, by the help

of God, it might be happily terminated in this campaign." [6]

Frederick was informed the same evening, by courier, of the turn which this first interview had taken, and without blaming his representative's resentment, took the insult more quietly in his own person. Not, most assuredly, that he had the least wish to take the field for Maria Theresa, but he did justice to himself, and as honour is seldom more squeamish than conscience, he was neither greatly offended nor much surprised that he should be distrusted, and that promises made by him should be received with caution. Therefore, he wanted to try, before he got angry, whether he might not contrive to substitute some less onerous surety for the costly pledge that was demanded of him. "I think I can perceive," he said to Podewils in reply, "that one of the chief difficulties of the peace to be made is the suspicion entertained by the Court of Vienna, that we might behave after the peace as we did after the Schnellendorf protocol. We must set the English and the Austrians at rest about our breaking our engagements; make them feel the difference between a treaty and a conference; and tell them

[6] Grünhagen, vol. ii. pp. 217 and 218. This writer records the interview of Podewils and Lord Hyndford at greater length than either Droyson or Coxe, taking the details from the English despatches consulted by him at the Record Office in London.

quite simply that we perfectly understand that they only want our assistance in order to make sure of us, and that we shall not change our mind on the first occasion; that as for the article of assistance, I reject it absolutely, but that I do not reject such expedient as Hyndford may think proper to propose in order to tranquillize the Court of Vienna. See what Hyndford will say to you." He even pointed out beforehand several methods of conciliation; for instance, that in the ceded provinces he might leave an insufficient number of troops for their protection, so that the Queen would be enabled to replace her own in them, if he did not keep his word to her. He also offered to subscribe a treaty of defensive alliance with the maritime powers, chiefly directed against France, immediately after the peace. Moreover, Podewils was authorized to deposit in Lord Hyndford's hands an autograph note, by which the King should pledge himself, once the arrangements were concluded, not to violate them under any pretext whatever. This was the contrary of what he had exacted in the preceding month of October, when he had refused to leave any written document, even a paper *the size of his hand*, in the possession of the negotiators of Klein-Schnellendorf. Lastly, knowing that Lord Hyndford, like many of the Scottish nobles, was not wealthy in proportion to his rank, Frederick instructed Podewils to sound him, so as to find out whether he would accept a

gratuity—the sum not to be less than 100,000 crowns—"which would gild the special fame that he will gain by saving the House of Austria." "In short," says Frederick, in conclusion, "I am resolved to make peace on the best conditions that I can, provided they are not dishonourable." [1]

All these advances were useless, probably because they were too urgent. Lord Hyndford refused the personal offer that was made to him, with haughty disdain. "The King does not know me," he said, "and does not know the peers of England." "But," resumed Podewils (reasoning after the custom of the time), "a minister who has successfully conducted a negotiation according to his conscience may accept proofs of a great sovereign's gratitude." "Let us be so fortunate as to make the peace," answered the Ambassador, smiling, "the rest will arrange itself." He remained equally immovable upon the condition of active assistance, which was the real knotty point of the discussion. In vain did Podewils repeat, by order of the King, that argument which he regarded as irresistible: "But if the Queen thinks she can carry on the war against the allies, supported as they are at present by Prussia, what need has she of us to help

[1] "Pol. Corr.," Frederick to Podewils, April 21, 1742. The Secretary of the Cabinet to Podewils, same date. Grünhagen, vol. ii. p. 221.

her to conquer them, when deprived of our assistance? The neutrality of the King ought to be enough for her." It would indeed have been impossible to refute this argument, if it had in reality been the material aid of Frederick, and not his sincerity, which it was proposed to secure. Hyndford replied with cool irony, "Your reasoning is like a theorem of Newton's, but I warrant you they will not be of that opinion at Vienna." In short, he would consent to nothing except the transmission of the Prussian proposals, without modification and without commentary, to Vienna by courier, and he asked for ten days' delay while awaiting the return of his messenger.[8]

Under such circumstances, there could be no doubt as to the reception of these proposals at Vienna. The Queen was full of the excitement of her success, and less than ever disposed to overstep the bounds of concessions which she had never even sincerely accepted. She condemned the perfidy of Frederick in the strongest terms; and the first time that she was again spoken to, after the first rupture, on the subject of a possible resumption of the negotiation, she asked: "Can any serious person now expect anything but imposture from the King of Prussia?"

To the Grand Duke, who still wished to take up his pen and write to the King, in order to make

[8] Grünhagen, vol. ii. p. 221.

sure of his intentions, she said, "My dear heart, you shall write if it pleases you to do so; but he is not worthy of it, and he will make a bad use of it. Do not degrade yourself, and take the fair pretext of our conquests" (for not replying to Frederick).

The Queen herself found a still better pretext for making an answer that did not compromise her. She was well aware that if she persisted in exacting immediate and effective assistance (which she would certainly not obtain), she might be as complacent as she chose upon the other points, without running any risk of being taken at her word. She therefore allowed it to be understood, that, while she refused any cession of territory in Bohemia, she would consent to extend the portion of Silesia that was to be ceded, "but always on the express condition, and not otherwise, that the said King guarantees the rest of the States of the House of Austria, at least those of Germany, and that he unites with the Queen and the maritime powers in making the French troops quit the Empire, whose liberty they oppress, at the earliest. A condition," she added, with a touch of irony, "which, far from being dishonouring to the King, secures to him the fame of being the liberator of his country, and the restorer of public liberty." When this answer was transmitted by Lord Hyndford to Podewils, the minister asked, "Is there nothing more in the bottom

of the bag?" "Nothing, upon my honour," replied the Englishman. "Then we are both very much to be pitied, for we have toiled in vain."[9]

In fact, when the King was informed that he had nothing else to expect, he wrote to Podewils that at such an impertinence he thought *he should have fainted.* In reality, however, he exaggerated his surprisé. The more than cold reception awarded to his urgency and his coaxing had enlightened him at last. After cursing and swearing at Hyndford for some time, and threatening that he would write to London and have him recalled, he resigned himself to the conviction that, if the negotiator displayed such dogged obstinacy, there was no hope of better behaviour on the part of the personage who was chiefly interested. With his accustomed mobility, and also with his habitual resolution, he made his calculations, and took his line accordingly. Since victory rendered Maria Theresa intractable, there remained only one method of bringing her to a more accommodating humour; that was the infliction of an exemplary chastisement, calculated to pull down her pride and her hopes, upon her. The design which Frederick conceived and immediately put in execution, was to strike a blow—one single blow if it were possible, but boldly, rapidly, and decisively—and then see whether the conversation

[9] D'Arneth, vol. ii. p. 67 and following, 468, 480, 481. Grünhagen, vol. i. p. 226.

could not be resumed on the morrow, on new and better terms.

The intervening ten days sufficed to enable him to concentrate his troops and put them in an advantageous position to offer and deliver battle to Prince Charles, immediately on the arrival of the answer from Vienna. On the given day, in fact, he found himself (as he tells us in his own narrative) at the head of *an army in good condition and well rested, ready to tempt the fortune of war*, composed of thirty-four battalions and sixty-four squadrons, in all nearly 34,000 men. In a postscript to his letter to Podewils he says: "We camp on the 13th, —effect of the negotiation."[1] And Podewils writes in all sincerity to Lord Hyndford: "Nothing can restrain the King any longer, he breathes only vengeance."

Before he went to take up his fighting position, however, he still had time to summon the French Envoy, whose conversation he had carefully avoided during the preceding days, to his presence. Not indeed that it required any great pains to escape from Valori; for that luckless diplomatist, entirely disheartened, and voluntarily shutting his eyes to designs which he understood only too well, but felt himself powerless to oppose, no longer endeavoured to procure an audience, but confined himself to filling his letters with lamentations and gloomy

[1] "Pol. Corr." vol. ii. pp. 137, 138.

forebodings. "My situation," he wrote from Chrudim, "becomes more disagreeable every day. I am the only one of the foreign Ministers present here; no one sees me, and I make a point of avoiding all occasions on which a want of proper regard for the King's Minister might be shown." How great must his surprise have been at receiving an invitation to repair to the royal tent, and hearing the tone of affection and confidence in which the King communicated to him the last proposals that his Majesty had received from Vienna.

"He told me," writes Valori, "that he had answered by the flattest possible negative, . . . putting in his reply that it was very useful to address themselves to him, seeing that he was resolved to do nothing except in concert with his allies. He has even written with his own hand on the margin: 'Let the Queen of Hungary go—.' Excuse me, monseigneur, for omitting to send you his own words; they are military; and indeed this sovereign is on the eve of encamping!" But Frederick did not add what Valori, taught by experience, had probably divined; namely, that the very proposals thus energetically repelled had been made in answer to demands in which an ally would have found quite as much to object to on the score of dishonesty. This fact deprived the King's swearing of its point and value.

Frederick went on talking, and condemned the

English in unmeasured terms. "These people," he said, "knock at every door. Let Belle-Isle know that they are negotiating at Dresden, and that they want to be our mediators. I am not of that way of thinking: let us make war very vigorously and admit no other mediation except the fulfilment of our treaties. For my part, I am going to advance upon the Austrians, and I will not let them make another step with their Hungarian rabble. I want it to be myself alone who shall beat them and have the pleasure of humbling them." At the same time he sent off a letter to Cardinal Fleury, in which he said more than ever of their mutual union and their indissoluble attachment. "I am encamped since yesterday," says he; "I am told that the enemy is marching on me; I beg you will have some masses said that this thing may happen. . . . M. de Belle-Isle will be in my camp on the 22nd, I think, and I am convinced that we shall be very well satisfied with each other." Valori transmitted the whole of this, the letter and the assurances, but his own tone was one of sorrowful incredulity, perfectly explicable by his recollection of so many deceptions and disappointments.[2]

Considering that Belle-Isle was on the point of arriving, and that Frederick was so certain of

[2] Valori to Amelot, May 12, 1742. (*Correspondance de Prusse.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Frederick to Fleury, May 14, 1742. "Pol. Corr." vol. ii. p. 163.

satisfying him, the simplest plan would have been to wait for him, so that the two together might have arranged a double attack, which, taking the two divisions of the Austrian army apart and at the same moment, and thus, as it were, firing along the whole line, would have swept it away at a blow. It does not appear, even by Frederick's own account, that a delay of a week or two would have jeopardized anything, or that Prince Charles, who was a very undecided person, was in any such hurry to assume the aggressive that it was necessary to come to blows with him at once. In any case, by prolonging the negotiation, into which he had entered without any scruple by an equivocal answer, Frederick might easily have obtained the respite that was necessary for the formation of so desirable a coalition. This concerted action was, however, exactly what Frederick did not want, because it would have meant his entering again with the French on a series of combined operations from which he could not afterwards have disengaged himself at will. When he stated to Valori that he wanted to beat the Austrians by himself, he uttered the only word of truth that escaped him during the entire interview. He wanted to have the victory to himself alone, in order that he might have the sole use of that victory. In reality, the battle which he was about to deliver was not the commencement of a campaign, but a phase of the negotiation which he

had suspended one day only that he might resume it with more advantage on the next.

On this point it must be said that he had both the fortune of war and his own genius in his favour.

The battle took place on the 17th of May, and its effect was exactly that which he desired. Sundry indications had made it evident to him that the object of Prince Charles was to make an extension towards Prague, clearing a way for himself between the Prussian and the French armies, and separating them from each other. Frederick disputed this passage with him, by placing his troops in the face of the Prince's army, in a sort of semi-circle, its left resting upon Chrudim, its centre occupying a marshy plain around Czaslau and Chotusitz, and its right extending to the little village of Kuttenberg. He thus completely closed the road to Prague against the Prince, who was obliged, as he could not allow all his movements to be paralyzed in this manner, to endeavour to force the barrier thus erected against him. He attacked the Prussian lines, and the first operations were favourable to him, for he succeeded in disordering the right wing of the Royal army, and putting it to the rout. Frederick then came to the rescue, and, operating briskly on the right, he promptly retrieved this defeat, and forced the Prince to retire with loss.

The engagement, although it did not last more than

three hours, was very sanguinary; 7000 were killed on the Austrian side, and 4000 on the Prussian, so that the victorious army had suffered not much less severely than the beaten forces. Frederick alleged this as a reason for not pushing his advantage any farther, so as to complete the rout of the demoralized enemy, either on the same day, or on the morrow. The consequence was, however, that the Prince of Lorraine's retreat was unmolested, and he was enabled to resume almost the same positions which he had occupied before his defeat. Although he was obliged to renounce the project of marching straight on to Prague, he retained what was more important to him, full freedom of communication with the troops of Prince Lobkowitz. By moving on his right, to join the Prince's division, he might still reach Prague; he could effect his purpose equally if he followed the two sides of the right angle, its diagonal line only was interdicted to him.

Inaction of this kind, after an affair so briskly undertaken, and so happily accomplished, was such a contradiction of Frederick's character, that all who were eye-witnesses of it observed the fact, and all historians comment upon it. Valori, who is very indulgent towards Frederick in general, remarks in his Memoirs, "The King on that day contented himself with the vain honour of the field of battle." "The Prussians," says D'Arneth, "did not pursue Prince Charles beyond the distance strictly necessary

to show that they remained masters of the field." Droysen's statements, which are equally precise, are accompanied by a very significant commentary, "It was," he says, "in the power of the King to annihilate the vanquished army, which seemed to melt away in retreating, but this was not his design."[3]

Leopold Ranke goes still farther; he affirms that when Marshal Schmettau strongly urged Frederick to take a complete advantage of his victory, the latter replied: "I do not wish to abase the Queen of Hungary to that point." This was then, so to speak, a duel to which the victor voluntarily put an end, after the first wound had been inflicted.

But, although it did not enter into Frederick's plan to gather all the fruit of this curious day, he did not fail to make a great noise about it; if he did not strike very heavily, he talked very loud.

On the same evening he wrote, with his own hand, to the King of France, the Emperor, the King of Poland, Belle-Isle, De Broglie, Valori, and

[3] Valori, *Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 158. D'Arneth, vol. ii. p. 55. Droysen, vol. i. p. 452. Belle-Isle in a letter to Charles VII., dated a few days after his arrival at the French camp, expresses his surprise that the King of Prussia should not have reaped all the fruit of his victory by making two or three marches forward, which would have forced Prince Charles to quit Bohemia. May 26, 1741 (National Library, new acquisition). The National Library now possesses a very complete collection of the letters of Charles VII. to Marshals de Broglie and Belle-Isle, acquired within the last few years.

Podewils. He addressed each in different terms, but his tone was full of exultation and enthusiasm. "Sire," said he to Louis XV., in a note written in haste on the battle-field, "Prince Charles has attacked me, and I have beaten him." To Charles VII. he wrote: "My satisfaction is all the greater that I hope your Imperial Majesty will become by this master of Bohemia;" and finally he wrote to De Broglie, not without a touch of offensive irony: "I am persuaded that you will not fail to profit by the consternation which this news will cause in the army of Prince Lobkowitz. It is of extreme importance to the common cause that you should not leave the enemy time to recover himself, and as I, for my part, inflict such considerable blows upon the enemy, your army could not be permitted, if it wished, to remain without doing anything. I think that would be an eternal shame to the French nation. I have too good an opinion of French bravery not to hope that it will seize this opportunity of winning fame." In writing to Podewils and Valori he employs familiar but still more expressive interjections.

"So then they wanted it, and their wish is accomplished, what remains for us to desire? Say to Hyndford, 'Sir, you have forced the King to destroy that House of Austria which you wanted to save. *Tu l'as voulu, Georges Dandin, tu l'as voulu!*'"

"So then, friend Valori, have I not kept my word, and have we not soundly beaten the Austrians? I hope that Messieurs the Frenchmen will be satisfied with me."

Valori was satisfied, doubtless, and he had good right to be so, but was he equally pleased with a second note, received two days later, and which was couched in somewhat different terms? "I have kept my word," said the King; "at present I am quits towards you and my allies, and those —— of Saxons have not been so."[4]

The good news thus cast to all the echoes reached Belle-Isle on the road from Frankfort to Prague. The Marshal had delayed for a long time in the imperial city in order to help the new Emperor—who was ill, gouty, overwhelmed with trouble, and short of money—through the troubles of taking possession; for Charles VII. could not do without the advice of Belle-Isle. The Marshal was also not ill-pleased to give time for the new French army, which was to operate in Bavaria, to arrive upon German territory, so that, Marshal de Broglie being appointed to the command of it, the two colleagues should have to be together at Prague for as short a period as possible.

He arrived on the 22nd of May, and found Broglie in a great difficulty. The indirect reproach which Frederick had conveyed in announcing his victory had cut the old soldier to the quick; he took up the

[4] "Pol. Corr." vol. ii. p. 164, 166, 167, and 173.

gauntlet, at once, and answered the King, in the tone of somewhat arrogant pride which was habitual to him, that, "so far as he knew, the French were in general more in need of the bridle than the spur." He wrote at the same time to the Marquis de Breteuil, Minister of War, as follows: "The King, it seems to me, might have told me the same thing in somewhat more obliging terms, but as perhaps he does not understand French, we must take it that his letter is more acceptable in his language than it is in ours."

His sense of honour was none the less piqued, and he felt that it was for him to complete the advantage carried off by the Prussians, and half-abandoned by Frederick; but all the while he was very justly puzzled and disquieted at the strange facility which had been afforded to Prince Charles for effecting his retreat, and making his junction with Lobkowitz at any moment he might choose to do so. "If the Prince arrives," said he, "I shall be overwhelmed." Moreover, he, as well as Belle-Isle, had received letter upon letter from Versailles during these latter days, both from the Minister and from the Cardinal, warning them, *never to place themselves in a position to have indispensable need of the King of Prussia*, because they never could be sure of him, and he was still suspected of wanting to transact a "*made up*" peace. This was the effect of the melancholy and too just presentiments of Valori; but it was natural that at the moment of action his

warnings should recur to memory, and they certainly had nothing encouraging in them.[5]

De Broglie imparted his anxiety to Belle-Isle, and for that day, the two Marshals, notwithstanding their avowed antipathy, placed their patriotism and sense of duty above their personal passions. Belle-Isle, especially, displayed the easiness of temper which is inspired by a feeling of triumph. "He was," said Marshal de Broglie afterwards "all luminous with the dignities and honours with which he is laden." They agreed, in order to satisfy Frederick, and sustain the honour of the French army, to attack Prince Lobkowitz, who had just reapproached the French lines in order to lay siege to the little town of Frauenberg, which was guarded by Bavarian troops. So soon as the enemy should have been intimidated and thrown back to a distance by this brisk movement, Belle-Isle was to go in person to the Prussian camp to confer with Frederick upon the general plan of operations for the summer, and to make sure, by looking the King in the face, and interrogating his countenance, of the sincerity of the co-operation that might be expected from him.

A combined attack did in fact take place upon the

[5] Amelot to Belle-Isle, April 25 to 29, May 12, 1742. (*Correspondance de l'Ambassade auprès la Diète.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Fleury to Belle-Isle, May 20, 1742. De Broglie to Belle-Isle, May 21. (*Correspondances diverses.*) Ministry of War. De Broglie to Breteuil, May 19. (*Correspondance officielle.*) Ministry of War. For the alarm caused to the French Ministry by the attitude of Frederick at this critical moment, see Appendix F.

26th of May, and with entire success. The French troops fell unexpectedly upon the rear of Lobkowitz's forces, meeting the rear-guard in the neighbourhood of the village of Sahay, at the mouth of a very narrow pass. A brisk encounter took place, which lasted a few hours, and terminated to the advantage of the French. This was only a small affair, but it had been very hot, and briskly fought, with all the valour and dash for which our troops were renowned. Lobkowitz retired precipitately, abandoning the siege which he had undertaken.

The two Marshals had remained fraternally side by side all day, and in the evening they appeared equally delighted, as they exchanged mutual congratulations upon their common victory. Belle-Isle himself paid his colleague the compliment of naming his second son, Count de Revel, as the bearer of the good news to Versailles. On the morrow, unfortunately, the harmony between them was disturbed. Belle-Isle, with his usual ardour, was in a hurry to profit by the advantage, and thought it possible to eject Lobkowitz from Bohemia by a daring pursuit. De Broglie, who was always more prudent, and who kept his eyes fixed upon the black spot on the horizon which hid the movements of the army of the Prince, was afraid to advance without precaution against an enemy whose forces might be doubled at any moment by a junction always to be apprehended. Belle-Isle replied, that in this case, if

they did not wish to advance, they must fall back, re-enter the secure positions which they had quitted the day before, and abandon their hold of the field of battle, where they could not maintain themselves against the very eventuality that was apprehended by Broglie.

Marshal de Broglie, on the contrary, thought that they might remain there, at least for so long as would be necessary for procuring information as to the support they might count upon from the Prussian army. On this point, as we shall see, events proved him to have been in the wrong.[6]

Belle-Isle started for the Prussian camp, equally dissatisfied with the situation which he left behind him, and uneasy about that which he was about to investigate. At each step his perplexities became more and more grave. He learned, in fact, that Frederick, far from preparing to pursue Prince Charles, was dispersing his troops in cantonments all along the little river Sasawa, under the pretext that they needed rest, and were in want of provisions. It was impossible to inform the Prince more convincingly, that he was free to act according to his pleasure, and that, provided he left the Prussians undisturbed, none of his movements

[6] Valori, *Mémoires*, vol. i. pp. 158—160. Correspondence of Belle Isle and Valori, *passim*. Broglie to Fleury, May 15, June 1, June 4, 1742. Ministry of War. *Mémoires du Duc de Luynes*, vol. ii. pp. 177—183.

would be obstructed. Belle-Isle, therefore, arrived at the camp of Kuttenburg with his mind full of the gravest suspicions. Frederick's proceedings are too well-known, after the minute and, I fear, somewhat monotonous statement of them which I have laid before my readers, for it to be necessary to say that the Marshal's suspicions were only too well-founded. I am, however, by no means sure that on the evening after his victory Frederick would not have been tempted to render it still more complete and brilliant, by achieving the total humiliation of Maria Theresa, in concert with France. The prudent Podewils was for this; he advised his master to profit by the opportunity, and rid Prussia once for all of the ever dangerous Austrian power in Bohemia. But this temptation to remain faithful and loyal, if it crossed the mind of Frederick, did not remain there, for, on the 21st of May, he let Lord Hyndford know that he was not intoxicated by success to the point of laying aside his desire to act with moderation. This was saying he was ready to resume the negotiation at the point where he had let it drop before the battle, without adding anything to or retracting anything from his ultimatum. This time Lord Hyndford accepted the decree of fortune without discussion, and on the spot sent counsels of resignation to Vienna. The method which he adopted to induce the Queen to act on his advice, indicates what he thought of her inflexible temper; for his

only argument was, that in matters of conquest nothing was irreparable, and that what fortune took away to-day, fortune might restore to-morrow. "The Queen," he said, "should the less hesitate to consent to what is demanded of her, that these concessions are wrung from her by violence, and by a double perfidy. No power in heaven or upon earth can blame the House of Austria in the future, if it uses reprisals hereafter, and on the first opportunity retakes by force that which is taken from it to-day."[1]

When this letter reached Vienna, almost simultaneously with the sad news of the defeat of Chotusitz, Maria Theresa was confined to her bed, having just given birth to a daughter, who received the name of Maria Christina, and afterwards filled an important place in the imperial family. Although no state of suffering had power to diminish her strength of character, she had less leisure than usual to discuss and contend with the entreaties by which she was besieged on all sides, and which were backed up by urgent despatches from London. She still resisted, however, for a few days, and when at length she was brought to yield, would only give a partial consent. She renounced her demand for the assistance of the King of Prussia, and consented to be satisfied with his neutrality, but she was

[1] "Pol. Corr." vol. ii. p. 174. Grünhagen, vol. i. p. 276, and following.

immovable in all that concerned the integrity of Bohemia.

"I will not let it be touched," said she, "even though the King of England should ask it of me at the head of his parliament. I would rather bury myself under the ruins of Vienna."

The most that could be obtained of the Queen was the maintenance of the proposal already made to extend the ceded portion of the territory of Silesia. Henceforth, the whole question was whether Frederick would consider this concession sufficient. As its conditions depended exclusively on his will, he held the "made up" treaty of peace, as Fleury called it, in one of his hands, on the day when he was to stretch out the other to Belle-Isle.[8]

None the less did he receive the French general like an old friend, with open arms, and a smiling face. He had gone to the entrance of the camp to meet him, and as they walked back together, the King perceived that a storm was rising. "You will take cold," said he, with the kindliest interest, and in-

[8] D'Arneth, vol. ii. p. 71. Grünhagen, vol. ii. p. 278, and following. ("Pol. Corr.") According to Droysen and Grünhagen the answer from Vienna did not arrive at Breslau until the 4th of June (the date of the interview of Frederick with Belle-Isle), and could not have been known at Kuttenberg on the same day. Frederick might therefore have still had some doubt about Maria Theresa's resignation; but he had none whatever concerning his own resolution to make a separate peace at any cost. This suffices to render the interview which I am about to describe truly characteristic.

sisted on Belle-Isle's accepting his own cloak. The conversation began with warm congratulations from Belle-Isle on the victory of the 17th of May. "The King," says Valori, "readily swallowed the incense, which was not spared." But he did not seem particularly disposed to repay it in kind; on the contrary, he was more than cool about the French success at Sahay, and even slightly ridiculed the fuss they had made about what he called a mere skirmish. Evidently, as he wanted to have to complain of his allies, it did not suit him to pay them compliments. Belle-Isle did not contradict him; for, although, on the battlefield of Sahay, he had been among the first to extol the victory, he had learned, before he left the camp, that certain friends of Marshal de Broglie had asked for the title of duke for him on this occasion, and he was no longer disposed to aid in the aggrandizement of his rival. The incident, however, enabled him to lead the conversation up to the really important point, for, Frederick having asked him very sharply why Prince Lobkowitz had not been followed up in his retreat, Belle-Isle retorted with less sharpness, but quite as firmly, by asking in his turn why the advantage given by the victory of Chotusitz had not been turned to account. "You are making over again," said the Marshal, "the same mistake you made after the taking of Neisse, that was so near being fatal to you." In saying this, he allowed

the King plainly to perceive that he remembered the offensive doubts which his conduct had then inspired.

Frederick, who probably no longer cared to justify himself, took no notice of the insinuation, but, while maintaining a calm and even gracious demeanour, he evinced an unalterable resolution not to take a single step in pursuit of the Prince of Lorraine. They must not count upon him before the 15th of July, he said; he would require all that time to repair his losses, and put his troops into fighting condition. If the French troops were available at that period, the allied forces might march upon Vienna by the two banks of the Danube. "But," said Belle-Isle, urging his point, "supposing Marshal de Broglie were attacked, in the mean time, by the two Austrian army corps together?" "He could retire into the intrenchments at Pisek, where he passed the winter," said Frederick, "and besides, why not call the Saxon troops, who have not yet served, to his aid? It is their turn to act now." All that Belle-Isle could obtain by dint of his urgency was that a Prussian detachment should advance upon the Sasawa, to the point at which that little river discharged itself into the Moldau, so that it might be brought to bear on Prague, if the town was seriously attacked. It was agreed that, in view of that eventuality, a bridge should be made at the place of the confluence.

Frederick then launched into general considerations, which, as they did not bind him to anything, gave him no trouble; thus endeavouring to soften the effect of his harsh refusal and his grudging grant of such meagre aid. He expatiated upon the unendurable pride and arrogance of the House of Austria. "Nothing," he said, "can exceed the vindictiveness of the Grand Duke, and especially the Queen of Hungary. If she be not humbled, she will stir up all Europe, even after a peace signed by herself, to recover what she may have lost. It is to my interest more than to any one's," he continued, "that she should not remain too powerful; for, after what has passed, there will always be implacable enmity between my House and hers. After all, perhaps I have gone too lightly into this war; and I have had moments of cruel anxiety. I shall never forget the manner in which you have behaved towards me. Now I desire nothing but a sound and durable peace."

Belle-Isle's curiosity was, no doubt, aroused by this desire for peace, which Frederick expressed for the first time; and he asked the King how, and on what conditions, he considered that the general peace might be concluded. Frederick answered him in the phrase which was repeated on a recent occasion and has become famous: *Beati possidentes;* and then went on to explain that the Emperor might keep Bohemia because he possessed it, but that Saxony (probably

because Moravia had not yet been conquered) ought to be content with some portion of Upper Silesia. "I do not think," he added, "that any more can be obtained from the Queen this year." "Then," continues Belle-Isle in his account of the conversation, which I must give here in his exact words, "he told me that he was going to speak to me frankly, openly, and in confidence, and that he required of me the most inviolable secrecy. He asked me whether *really* and *in fact* we did not lay claim to obtaining something in compensation for the immense expenses of the war. Upon this I repeated the same statement which I told you I had made both in speech and writing last year, on a similar question, and which I do not recapitulate here. He said that it was very generous of the King, that, in fact, it was all important for France to have abased the House of Austria and placed on the imperial throne a prince who was the most honest man in Germany, and one on whose friendship the King and his allies could confidently rely. . . . But he added, that, nevertheless, we must have Luxembourg. To this I replied by an absolute negative, saying it would be enough for us to have it razed, and we could afterwards settle the boundaries of that frontier. The King of Prussia said he considered this very little, nothing could be more just or indeed more praiseworthy, and that in this respect the peace would be easy to make." [9]

[9] Belle-Isle to Amelot, June 4, 1742. (*Correspondance de Prusse.*)

What could have been Frederick's design in thus complacently tracing the ideal lines of a partition with which his allies would be satisfied, while he actually had at the time in his pocket a treaty proposed, and almost already signed, by himself, pitilessly sacrificing them all? What did he propose to effect by suggesting prospective conquests to the General of that French army for which he was already prepared to secure an inevitable defeat, by forsaking it and leaving it to isolation far away in the heart of Germany? Why did he select, among the temptations to be offered to Fleury, that same province of Luxembourg which he afterwards reproached the Cardinal, in public documents, with having clandestinely obtained from Maria Theresa? Let us examine the matter ever so closely, one single explanation only is possible; unless, indeed, we credit Frederick with lavish and refined duplicity. We must believe that he was striving by this device to wring from Belle-Isle the acknowledgment of a secret ambition which would have justified his own faithlessness, and which he would have taken credit with his future allies, for instance, England and Holland, for having discovered and defeated. The character of a suborner (*agent provocateur*) is the only one which can be reasonably assigned to him.

If such was really his calculation, it was defeated by Belle-Isle's reserve, and this disappointment may be detected in a note drawn up after the conversation with his own hand, to be transmitted to

Podewils for his guidance in his last conferences with Lord Hyndford. The principal points treated by Belle-Isle are set down in the form of question and answer, and the last is as follows: "As for France, so far as I was able to remark, she has asked nothing but *Montbéliard, a few villages of the Germersheim*, and the dismantling of Luxembourg. That is, unless they are keeping something *in petto*, and that it is very difficult to guess." And he adds: "All this is very curious; you know my way of thinking well enough to be aware of what my conclusion is." History will also regard this document as a curious one, and will know just as well, I fear, what conclusion to arrive at respecting the character and the conduct of the writer.[1]

The close of the interview had been cordial enough; the King had spoken with tolerable explicitness; his desire to make a peace common to, and advantageous for all, appeared sufficiently sincere to enable Belle-Isle to leave Kuttenberg, without quite desponding of his ulterior intentions. "Let us hold on for a month," said he to Valori, "and

[1] Belle-Isle to Amelot, from Kuttenberg, June 4, 1742. (*Correspondance de Prusse et Correspondance de l'Ambassade auprès de la Diète*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs. There are two despatches from Belle-Isle relative to the different points of the conversation. "Pol. Corr.," vol. ii. p. 181. Frederick to Podewils, June 4, 1742. The account given by Belle-Isle differs on certain points from that of the King. The Latin phrase, *Beati possidentes*, is contained in the royal note. It appears, indeed, that Frederick wrote it, *Beatus est possidendi.* Modern editors have corrected the solecism.

all will be safe." But just as he was setting out he received intelligence from the King himself that information had been brought in by scouts to the effect that Prince Charles, with twenty thousand men, was marching in the direction of the camp of Prince Lobkowitz. The news gave Belle-Isle a great shock; he saw instantly that all was lost, and fell into a swoon. This had occurred to him more than once since his recent illness, and he now remained unconscious for some minutes. Being laid on the ground and revived with smelling salts, he at length recovered, and immediately sent off the news to Marshal de Broglie. He then repaired with all speed to Dresden.[2]

Notwithstanding all his haste, Belle-Isle was too late. Even before he had left the Prussian camp, the junction of the two Austrian armies was effected. On a comparison of dates, no doubt could exist that Prince Charles had awaited the answer of Maria Theresa to Frederick's proposals to put himself in motion. The messenger who carried that answer could not have failed to communicate it to him in crossing his lines, and Prince Charles, being thenceforth certain of being neither pursued nor attacked, acting in full security against an enemy who was

[2] These details, which are not included in the Correspondence and Memoirs of Marshal de Belle-Isle, are given in a note added by the chief clerk at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to a justificatory narrative by the Marshal of the whole of his mission, which will be found at the end of this volume.

delivered over to him defenceless, pushed on with unexpected boldness and celerity. Having first rejoined the division of Prince Lobkowitz by forced marches, and then taken it on with him, he had only to present himself before the advanced posts of the French with his united forces, amounting to at least sixty thousand men, to render the retreat of Marshal de Broglie, who had only between twenty-five and thirty thousand men, inevitable. The Marshal relinquished to the Prince, first, the ground he had occupied before Pisek, and next, Pisek itself (he could not have maintained himself there with such inferiority of strength), and hastened to place himself under the walls of Prague. The only thing that he could do was to check the enemy by the intrepidity of his attitude, so that he might not be followed too closely. Nevertheless, he was obliged to execute this falling-back movement with considerable precipitation, which led to the loss of a quantity of baggage and ammunition, and to the arrival of the army before Prague in a state of disorder. The city had every reason to believe itself in peril. Here was the occasion, the only one (as we have seen) on which Frederick had promised Belle-Isle his assistance; the generous ally of France, however, hailed it as his opportunity for making the abandonment on which he had long been resolved public and final.

In reality, his calculations were disturbed by the

promptitude of the occurrence. He had reckoned upon slower movements on the part of Prince Charles, and greater resistance in the French army. When the news reached him, he had not yet formally authorized Podewils to give his adherence to Maria Theresa's answer. On being informed of the rapidity of the march and the success of the Austrians, he was seized with fear lest, if Prague should fall into their hands by a surprise, like that which had taken the city from them six months before, or even if Maria Theresa was told of the advantage her troops had gained before all had been concluded and ratified between her and him, the indomitable Queen might rescind the consent that had been wrung from her, and the whole question be reopened by new exactions. He hastily wrote the following imperative instructions to his Minister: "The unforeseen circumstances that have just happened to the French troops in Bohemia, oblige me to inform you in the most positive manner, that, as soon as you have received these presents, you are to exchange your powers with those of Lord Hyndford. . . . As for the conditions, try to have them as good for me as possible, either on the side of Bohemia, or, if there is nothing to be done there, on the side of Upper Silesia. But, after having done all you can during one half-day, my express desire is that, without making your report to me, without asking or waiting my resolution thereupon, you should abso-

lutely settle the points upon which you are to agree with Lord Hyndford, put them in writing, and incontinently sign them, with Lord Hyndford, in the form of a preliminary of peace. So soon as these preliminaries have been signed both by yourself and Lord Hyndford, you are to send them to me with your reports, so that I may ratify them; and the signing between you and Hyndford being done, you must get Hyndford to give notice of it by an express courier, who might then go on, by Glatz, Königgratz and Kolin, to Prince Charles of Lorraine, so that the latter may be informed privately that the matter between myself and the Queen of Hungary is concluded. . . . I sleep in peace, convinced that the signed preliminaries will be brought to me." [3]

Frederick had two nights in which to sleep in peace while awaiting the fulfilment of his commands. His letter was written on the 9th, and it was not until the 11th that Valori, acting on the information sent by Marshal de Broglie and brought by Mortagne, came to demand the assistance that had been promised in the case of urgent necessity.

At first, although he displayed great annoyance and showered profuse invectives upon the incapacity of the French generals, Frederick did not repudiate his pledged word. On the contrary, he seemed to wish even to go beyond what he had promised, for he talked of marching on Prague in person; only

[3] "Pol. Corr.," Frederick to Podewils, vol. ii. p. 190.

he wished to wait two days longer for further details. On Valori's representing to him that haste was necessary, and that, even while he waited, the detachments nearest to Prague might be ordered to advance, he said: "Do not urge me to do it; you are sufficient example for me of what may come of making detachments. My friend," he added, "your eloquence might perhaps induce me *to make some treaty or other*, but it will fail to make me do what you propose. (If I fight) I want to beat or be beaten altogether."

A few hours afterwards, Valori again asked for audience of the King. This time it was Belle-Isle who sent a pressing and almost despairing appeal from Dresden, where the bad news had reached him. "Monsieur le Marquis de Valori," said Frederick, "I do not wish to deceive the King; I am about to speak to you with the utmost possible frankness. Things are in a desperate condition. . . . Your M. de Broglie deserves every kind of reproach; there is no longer a French army, you are cut off from your reserves and your magazines. . . . This is a lost affair. I tell you peace must be made." Then he recurred to the information which he had received (from what he asserted to be unimpeachable authority) of clandestine negotiations carried on between Vienna and Paris, without his knowledge. "I do not choose to play the dupe," said he, "and I repeat to you that I am *working at my peace;* your affairs are in a

state from which they cannot recover." "I made an involuntary movement," continued Valori, "and he immediately said, 'I see you are much annoyed, but it is Marshal Belle-Isle to whom you ought to say so.' I told the King that my surprise was indeed extreme, all the more so as affairs could not be so desperate, unless indeed he would not put a hand to them; that there was more than one sure means by which they might be retrieved. 'Yes,' he replied, 'by again exposing myself to a battle, and that is what I do not want. I have been the cause of enough human blood-shedding, and I have too much at stake upon the issue of a battle to wish to expose myself to it. I shall be ruined along with you if I do not think of myself.' 'But, sire,' said I, 'what is to become of the Emperor, if your Majesty, of whose making he is, forsakes him? and what security will your Majesty have in the end? Does your Majesty take heed of the state in which this peace leaves you?' 'As for me,' replied the King, 'that is my own business, and I will get out of it as I can. Something must be done for the Emperor. In short, my dear Valori, you must set off to Marshal de Belle-Isle.' Then he turned his back on me with a brief salutation (*au plaisir de vous revoir*)." [4]

[4] Valori to Amelot, June 11, 1742. (*Correspondance de Prusse.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs. There are two despatches written with a few hours' interval between them. "Pol. Corr.," vol. ii. pp. 197 and 210.

Valori left the King's presence quite bewildered. His dismay and astonishment were so great, and betrayed themselves so openly, that Frederick could not resist the temptation of drawing a pitilessly comic picture of him in a letter to Podewils which he wrote on the same evening. "No buffoon," said the cruel jester, "could imitate the contortions of Valori; his eyebrows made zigzags on his forehead, his mouth opened wide, he quivered in the oddest way; and all without having anything sound to say to me." Then he added: "This is a great and fortunate event that places my House in possession of the most flourishing provinces of Germany on coming out of a war that is the most famous in the world. We should always know how to stop in time; to force fortune is to lose it, and to be always wanting more is the way never to be happy. Adieu; I am going to send off my fat Valori and Mortagne, who are insatiable for the shedding of Prussian blood." [5]

The commission with which Valori was charged was distressing enough, but he had to encounter, on arriving at Prague, a spectacle which was, if possible, more grievous—that of the two Marshals giving vent to their mutual and more than ever bitter animosity, in the midst of the universal confusion. Both one and the other wanted to command, and they could not agree upon anything. Belle-Isle, who

[5] "Pol. Corr.," vol. ii. pp. 197 and 210.

had come back from Dresden immediately after the retreat, severely criticized the position which his colleague had taken up under the walls of Prague, and Broglie obstinately refused to make any change in it. In this conflict the two Marshals exhibited the principal characteristic of each; so that the restless activity of Belle-Isle and the calm, but rather inert firmness of Broglie, added a difficulty the more to the common misfortune. This diversity of temper made itself manifest, even in the manner of their reception of the message and the messenger. "I have always expected this," said Marshal de Broglie, without displaying any emotion, "I have never shared in the hope that has been attempted to be given to the King." Belle-Isle, on the contrary, chose to remain incredulous. He begged them to observe that the letter of which Valori was the bearer spoke only in a general way of the necessity of making peace, and did not distinctly express a resolution on the part of Frederick to make it by himself alone, and on his personal account. Thus was Valori placed in the painful position of agreeing with neither of the two chiefs, and being equally ill-received on both sides. The one reproached him with believing that all was lost, because an event which he ought to have foreseen had occurred, and with having *fear depicted in* his face. "What is your King of Prussia to me?" said he; "the thing is to fight well if we are attacked." The other, on

the contrary, made it a grievance that Valori had set out without sufficient explanations, without even leaving Frederick time for reflection, and, indeed, that he had allowed himself to be charged with a mission which he should not have accepted, for the Envoy of the King of France ought not to be a commissioner of the King of Prussia.[6]

Valori, being dismissed in this fashion, set out again with the least possible delay, carrying an answer from Belle-Isle, who made a supreme effort to avert a catastrophe which he still strove to doubt. If anything could enhance the patriotic grief of a Frenchman, it was the general joy which the Envoy could read in every face, on his return to the Prussian camp. The news of the peace was public, and, although the conditions of it were not yet known, it was welcomed by the army and the population with unmixed satisfaction. Valori had great difficulty in obtaining permission to approach the King, and Frederick received him with an air of constraint, merely saying that he was obliged to him for the trouble he had taken. Then, after a few commonplaces about the regret with which he found himself reduced to this extremity, Frederick withdrew, "appearing to be in a great hurry," says Valori, "to get rid

[6] Valori, *Mémoires*, vol. i. pp. 164 and following. Broglie to Breteuil, June 16 and 25, 1742. Ministry of War. Belle-Isle to Amelot, June 15, 1752. (*Correspondance de l'Ambassade auprès de la Diète.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

of my grave aspect, which seemed to reproach him."

The embarrassment of the ambassador was extreme. Ought he to remain at the camp, where he had nothing more to do, and where his presence made everybody uncomfortable, or ought he to return to Berlin, there to be a witness of the triumph of his English colleague, and of the popular satisfaction? On reflection he determined to wait. His motives for this were twofold: first, he wanted to find out if possible what was the exact tenor of the clauses of the peace, whether the abandonment of the King's allies was complete, or whether, as Frederick had allowed him to suppose, there were *a few trifles for the Emperor;* and then he wanted, as he says, "to see whether, with a man of his character, it might not be possible to make something out of his defection; for, according to all appearances, that might not be any more sincere than his alliance."

In fact, after Valori had passed a few days in very inconvenient retirement, it was the King himself who sent for him, and appeared quite surprised that he had not seen him for so long. "How comes it, my dear Valori," said he, "that you are playing the owl with me? Pray rely on my desire to be always your friend. By my faith, I could not do otherwise than as I have done. I had very strong reasons, I cannot tell you what they are at present.

I do not mean to deny to you that I have kept the negotiation going, but in a lukewarm manner. I wanted to finesse, and to have a door open to get out of in case of an accident; I thought the accident had happened, and that all was lost by Broglie's retreat. So soon as I knew all the details, I sent off an express—the very same day—with the order to sign. That is just how it happened." Then he asked Valori where he thought of going to, and the Envoy answered that he should probably go to Prague. "And why to Prague? Why not go direct to Berlin?" "Sire," replied Valori, "I go to Prague to await the commands of the King, and in order that there may be one man the more there in case of the enemy's attacking us." This noble answer seemed to touch the King, and Valori, taking heart, seized upon the opportunity to represent to him the danger to which he exposed himself by entering upon a course in which, while he could no longer count upon the allies whom he was forsaking, he would before long find himself all alone with Maria Theresa in a victorious and resentful mood. "Your Majesty," said he, "will find reason for repentance." "Is this a prophecy of Nostradamus that you offer me?" "No, Sire; but I think it is the expression of sound policy and right reason." "Hark ye, my friend, you may believe that I see what you say to me is for my own interest. You cannot then doubt but that I

am still concerned for yours. Why not make the Saxons act? They are —— I acknowledge, and there is that smoöth-tongued Jesuit, that Guarini, whom I reproach myself with having deceived." "Sire," said Valori, "your Majesty need not flatter yourself on that point; Guarini has never been your dupe; he always said that your Majesty was deceiving or would deceive, and I assure you that I have broken more than one lance with him in that quarrel." "But this is not deceiving; it is only getting out of a thing."

The end of this strange colloquy, which did not take place all at once, but was several times interrupted and resumed, clearly indicated its object. "Take your measures," said the King, "that I may be apprised of what happens in Prague and of all the events of the war; for, if your affairs prosper, as I hope they will, and that you beat the Austrians, I shall be in a position to speak, and by representing their weakness, and the necessity under which they will find themselves of partly satisfying the allies, I shall again become in some sort a mediator, in spite of the English and the Queen of Hungary; and as you may well suppose, it will thenceforth be my interest to strengthen the hand of the Emperor." Thereupon he left Valori, having closely embraced him, saying, "Ah, *caro*, do come to Berlin, I beg of you." Valori had discerned the truth: no sooner had Frederick entered into a new alliance, than he

began to contrive means of communication with the camp he had just quitted. The cards were indeed shuffled and differently dealt, but the double game was still going on, and Frederick offered Valori the place in his self-interested and intermittent confidence that could no longer be held by Lord Hyndford.[7]

If Valori had attributed any other meaning to Frederick's fair words—if, for instance, he had imagined that they had implied a remnant of solicitude for the security of the King's former allies—he would have been cruelly undeceived when the conditions of peace were made public by the arrival of the ratification from Vienna at the end of June; for it would have been impossible to find in it even the shadow of a remembrance of the alliance that had come to an end. Austria yielded to Prussia the whole of Upper and Lower Silesia, with the exception of the duchies of Teschen, the town of Troppau, and a few strips of unimportant territory. On the other hand, the King of Prussia contracted no fresh engagement, beyond the reimbursement of a loan formerly made to Austria by England, and charged as a mortgage upon the revenues of Silesia. The name of France was not even mentioned; no precaution was taken to secure liberty of retreat for her army, or to procure her facilities for entering into nego-

[7] Valori to Amelot and to Belle-Isle, June 20, 21, and 28, 1742. (*Correspondance de Prusse.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

tiation and taking part in the peace. The same silence was maintained with respect to the Emperor; there was not even a "trifle" in his favour. Saxony was, it is true, spoken of, but it was in order to induce King Augustus to enter into the new treaty, in common with England, Russia, Holland, and Denmark, on the express condition that he should withdraw all the troops which he still maintained in Bohemia within fifteen days at the latest. In a word, he was offered his safety on the condition of entering on the spot into a new coalition directed against France. The well-known character of Augustus placed his acceptance of this offer beyond a doubt.

This was the last blow, the filling up of the measure. When Belle-Isle fully realized it, he stood aghast. Of the immense effort which his diplomacy had caused to be made, there remained nothing but an army of 25,000 Frenchmen, destitute, and blockaded behind dismantled ramparts far away in Germany. Nevertheless, Frederick wrote to him, for his consolation: "I look upon this affair as a navigation undertaken by several with one same object, but which, being upset by a shipwreck, places each of the navigators under the necessity of saving himself by swimming, and landing wherever he can. From that landing-place I stretch out my hand to my allies, and I desire my own safety only that I may procure theirs." To

the Emperor he wrote: "Finding myself reduced to a position in which my sword can no longer be of any aid to your Majesty, I assure you that my pen shall serve you always, and that my heart shall never fail your Imperial Majesty." [8] Lastly, he addressed a long, embarrassed, and confused letter to Fleury, in which he recapitulated his real or pretended grievances, and concluded with the following bold assertion: "The present war is a tissue of marks of good-will that I have given to my allies." [9]

If Belle-Isle was overwhelmed with grief by the sudden collapse of all the fabric of his hopes, we may judge what were the feelings of Fleury, who had never shared them. "It is said," wrote the English Envoy, "that the Cardinal burst into tears." For what did he weep? Was it for France, or for himself and for his twenty successful, almost glorious years, which had vanished in the twinkling of an eye? If it were not that the love of life is the last sentiment that lingers in the weak of soul, and even grows stronger as they near the grave, Cardinal Fleury might on that dark day have regretted the miracle of his longevity. Louis XV. put a much better face upon it, and, after a few days of confusion,

[8] "Pol. Corr.," vol. ii. pp. 205 and 207. Frederick to the Emperor and to Belle-Isle, June 18, 1742.

[9] "Pol. Corr.," vol. ii. pp. 206 and 208. Frederick to Fleury, June 18, 1742.

the word was given at Court that the event was to be spoken of coolly, almost with indifference, as of a matter long foreseen, and that no bitter reproaches of the King of Prussia were to be uttered. This was a measure of dignity as well as prudence. In fact, as peace appeared to be necessary, in the extremity to which France was reduced, it was useless to increase the difficulties in the way of it by irritating a proud man, and refusing (to use his own metaphor) the hand which he might yet extend to the shipwrecked. We find this feeling expressed with more than his customary reserve, and less than his usual excess of politeness, in the answer which Cardinal Fleury addressed direct to Frederick :—

"Sire, I will not dissemble the bitterness of heart which the letter with which it has pleased your Majesty to honour me on the 18th of this month has caused me, and I am sure your Majesty will pardon it in the bottom of your heart. . . . I had such perfect confidence in the often reiterated word of your Majesty to listen to nothing except in concert with us, and we have, on our side, so faithfully observed this treaty, that I cannot express the astonishment with which I have learned the unhoped-for (*sic*) changes of your Majesty. I will not enter, from respect, into a discussion of all the motives of the step your Majesty has taken, although I should have many things to say in reply; but that would

be useless, and, now that your Majesty has made the peace, we have only to subscribe to it, without even complaining of it to the public. I can assure your Majesty of our circumspection, and of our silence. I acknowledge that I cannot say the same of the nation; your Majesty knows the freedom with which it speaks; but, if any attempt were made to stop it, the only result would be to irritate. . . . I hope your Majesty may find in your new allies the same fidelity and honesty which you will always find in us; our interest will always be to maintain your Majesty's power and authority, and I am happy to believe that your Majesty is too well informed not to acknowledge that your own is of a reciprocal kind. Sooner or later your Majesty will feel this still more, and, if I may be allowed to speak of myself after names so worthy of respect, I will take the liberty of assuring your Majesty that nothing shall make me forget all the marks of personal kindness with which you have been pleased to honour me." [1] The last sentence was perhaps superfluous. The same courier carried instructions addressed to Belle-Isle, by which he was enjoined to repair to the

[1] Fleury to Frederick, June 30, 1742. (*Correspondance de Prusse.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This is not the letter that is inserted in "L'Histoire de mon Temps." Fleury wrote twice to Frederick. The first time, on June 21, when it might be thought that the only thing which he proposed was to enter into negotiations for peace in common with his allies, and a second time on June 30, when his defection was known and certain. Frederick published only the first of these two letters.

Austrian camp with overtures of peace. Valori affirms, in his Memoirs, that Fleury wrote with his own hand on the text of these instructions, "Peace, monsieur, at whatever cost." However worthy of belief the testimony of Valori may be, I am bound by the obligations of truth to say that I have searched in vain for this postscript upon the minutes preserved in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[2]

A few days afterwards, Fleury had sufficiently regained his composure to be able to give audience to Chambrier, Frederick's Envoy, who did not venture to present himself at Versailles until a whole week had elapsed. The Cardinal received him with the air of gentleness and Christian resignation that became his priestly character, and of which he skilfully availed himself to disguise his weakness. "Since the King of Prussia," he said, "has thought it right to make this peace without including us in it, no doubt it is because he believed he could not do otherwise. We must forget everything, and get out of the unfortunate position we are in. I leave all to Providence, who has the power to humble whom it will. The English will now become more arrogant than ever. I do not know, however, whether they greatly like the King of Prussia, nor do I know whether the King can

[2] Valori, *Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 76. The expression *at whatever cost* does indeed occur in one of Amelot's despatches, but it is accompanied by restrictions which limit and lessen its bearing.

have much confidence in the Queen of Hungary, who will never forget that she has lost Silesia." "Nor that she has lost Lorraine, your Eminence will permit me to add," answered the Prussian neatly. "Certainly," said the Cardinal. "You see we had good reasons for being together." Then he added devoutly, "We are in the hands of God: we must hope that He will enable us to get out of the state we are in."[3]

Would it be believed that if there were lamentations at Versailles, there was weeping at another Court also? Maria Theresa shed bitter tears at Vienna. On the day after a peace that restored a kingdom to her, delivered her from one of her enemies, and avenged her upon the other, she was inconsolable. Sir Thomas Robinson wrote of the Queen that she repeatedly declared she had lost the fairest jewel of her crown, and that, forgetting her royalty, she would burst into tears, like an ordinary woman, on seeing a Silesian. She would also occasionally break out against the English influence which had constrained her to yield, and poor Sir Thomas had to bear the brunt of her anger. "Lord Hyndford may talk lightly," he said, "of this amputation, because he is at a distance, but he who is present at a great operation, although he does not

[3] Chambrier to Frederick, July 8, 1742. A copy of the correspondence of the Prussian Envoy exists among the papers of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I do not know how it came into the possession of our archives.

suffer so much as the patient, nevertheless suffers with him and from him."[4]

Although the impression was different, it was equally profound, in all the European Courts, and was no less so among the populations. In England, Holland, all the Protestant countries, the rejoicing was great. The humiliation of France was hailed with exultation, and in the young hero who thus slighted the great Catholic power the people greeted by anticipation a new Gustavus or a future William of Orange.

Bonfires were lighted in the streets of the Hague, and even under the windows of the Ambassador of France, amid cries of "Long live Prussia, and death to the French!" In Paris, on the contrary, indignation and consternation reigned, and Fleury said no more than the truth when he told Frederick that it was impossible to prevent the public from giving vent to its feelings. "The rage against your Majesty," wrote Chambrier, "is unmeasured; it finds expression in utterances which I could not venture to reproduce without an express command."

Fleury would have been all the less able to check the course of popular anger, in that it did not spare himself any more than his ministers and his generals. The captious and critical spirit that was even then hardly restrained by respect for royalty had ample opportunity for displaying itself, and we know what

[4] Räumer, *Beitrage zur neuen Geschichte.* Ranke, vol. v. p. 527.

was the usual form taken by the opposition under that absolute monarchy, "tempered," as it has been said, "by songs." Songs were mercilessly made upon the credulity of Belle-Isle, and the incapacity of Broglie; and caricatures appeared in which the Cardinal was represented sprawling on all fours before the Queen of Hungary, who was flogging him with a birch rod. But all these things had been done to Madame de Maintenon, to Villeroy, and to Chamillart, in their turn. The very severity of the satires was but the expression of wounded national pride. It was, however, only between French people themselves and in private that railing accusations and bitter jests were exchanged. The French public had not yet been taught by sham friends of humanity to cast off the prejudices of patriotism, and, in the interests of philosophy and enlightenment, to carry their homage and confide their grievances to foreign or inimical sovereigns. Tears were shed over the misfortunes of France, and her errors were criticized, but no one would have dreamed of paying compliments to the faithless ally who had so artfully taken advantage of those errors and misfortunes.

I am mistaken, there was one exception to this—one only—Frederick did receive the congratulations of a Frenchman. Must I name him? It was Voltaire. On that day the great writer inaugurated the broad system of indifference to public misfor-

tunes in which he was imitated by so many disciples, twenty years afterwards, and until the end of the old régime. But the first trial that he made of the system was so near turning out ill for him that it ought to have been enough to disgust him with it.

Frederick's faithlessness did not take Voltaire altogether by surprise; with his accustomed perspicacity he had been for a long time past reading between the lines of prose or verse which his royal friend sent him, and if he had not encouraged him in the design that he detected, he had at least assured Frederick beforehand that he would not be seriously displeased with him. Early in June, on arriving in Paris from the country, he wrote to Frederick:—

Sitôt que je suis aperçu,
On court, on m'arrête au passage,
" Eh bien, dit-on, l'avez-vous vu,
Ce roi si brillant et si sage ?
Est-il vrai qu'avec sa vertu
Il est pourtant grand politique ?
Fait-il des vers, de la musique,
Le jour même qu'il s'est battu ? "
". . . On dit qu'il suit de près les pas
Et de Gustave et de Turenne
Dans les camps et dans les combats,
Et que, le soir, dans un repas,
C'est Catulle, Horace, et Mécène."
A mes côtés, un raisonneur,
Endoctriné par la gazette,
Me dit d'un ton rempli d'humeur:
" Avec l'Autriche on dit qu'il traite."
"Non, dit l'autre, il sera constant,
Il sera l'appui de la France."

Une bégueule, en s'approchant,
Dit : " Que m'importe sa constance !
Il est aimable, il me suffit ;
Et voilà tout ce que j'en pense,
Puisqu'il sait plaire tout est dit." [5]

On the very day that witnessed the conclusion of the treaty by which France was brought to the brink of destruction, Frederick despatched to the correspondent who evinced so much anticipatory complacence a dithyramb of clumsy and incorrect construction, upon the benefits of peace :—

O paix ! heureuse paix ! répare sur la terre
Tous les maux que lui fait la destructive guerre,
Et que ton front, paré de renaissantes fleurs,
Plus que jamais serein, prodigue tes faveurs.
Mais, quel que soit l'espoir sur lequel tu te *fonde*,
Pense que tu n'auras rien fait,
Si tu ne peux bannir deux monstres de ce monde—
L'ambition et l'intérêt ! [6]

Voltaire replied, without faltering : " Sire, I have received verses, and very pretty verses, from my adorable King, at the time when we thought that your Majesty's only purpose was to deliver Marshal de Broglie, your old Strasburg friend, from his distress. Your Majesty has slipped into your letter the pleasant word peace, that word which is so harmonious to my ear. The *bleeder* (*saigneur*—a play upon the word *seigneur*) of the nations, Frederick

[5] Voltaire to Frederick, June, 1742, *Correspondance générale.*

[6] Frederick to Voltaire, from Kuttenberg, June 18, 1742, *Correspondance générale.*

II., Frederick the Great, has crowned my wishes. . . I have learned that your Majesty has made a very good treaty, very good for you no doubt, for you have formed your powerful mind to be a great politician. But whether this treaty is good for us, French people, is the matter in doubt in Paris; one half the world cries out that you abandon our troops to the discretion of the God of armies; the other half cries out also, and does not know what is the matter. Certain "abbés de Saint Pierre" bless you in the midst of the uproar. I am one of those philosophers. I believe that you will force all the powers to make peace, and that the hero of the age will be the pacificator of Germany and of Europe. I hold you to have outstripped

> Ce vieillard vénérable, à qui les destinées
> Ont de l'heureux Nestor accordé les années.

Achilles has been more skilful than Hector: lucky skill if it contribute to the welfare of the world! Now the time has come when your Majesty may grant some recreation to that great mind which is welded of so many various qualities. Be assured that before a month is over I shall go to Brussels myself to fetch the papers which you deign to honour with a little curiosity. . .[1] You are then, Sire, no longer our ally, but you will be that of the human kind; your desire will be that each may

[1] In Frederick's letter he had asked to see the manuscript of Voltaire's *Siècle de Louis XV.*

possess his rights and his inheritance in peace, and that there shall be no more troubles: this will be the philosopher's stone of politics, and it is to come out of your laboratory. Say: 'I will that people shall be happy,' and happy they shall be. Have a good opera, and a good theatre. May I be a witness at Berlin of your pleasures and your renown!"[8]

"I trouble myself very little about the outcry of the Parisians," wrote Frederick—more than ever encouraged to take things easily—in reply. "They are hornets that are always buzzing; their taunts are like a parrot's swearing; their decisions are as grave as the judgment of monkeys in matters of metaphysic. If all France were to condemn me, Voltaire the philosopher will never allow himself to be led away by the crowd!" He ended by a coarsely jocose comparison between political alliances and marriages in which each of the contracting parties may pronounce a divorce, if the other be found too exacting or not sufficiently faithful.[9]

But, while the two friends were indulging in this pleasant interchange of compliment and poetry, at the expense of the honour and the blood of France, a singular incident occurred. Voltaire's letter, although carefully sealed and sent direct to Berlin, was found, one morning, to be scattered all over Paris

[8] Voltaire to Frederick, July, 1742.

[9] Frederick to Voltaire, July 25, 1742, *Correspondance générale.*

by hundreds of copies. Every minister, every ambassador received a copy, directed to himself, among others, Chambrier, the Prussian Minister, who found one, he said, at his door, in a cover. In all the cafés the letter was passed from hand to hand and eagerly read. The scandal and the outcry were universal, especially at the Court, where, as each had a brother, a kinsman, or a friend fighting for life or liberty at Prague, there was but little solicitude to know how the opera or the play was to be organized at Berlin. The Cardinal, who was personally hit hard, disguised his resentment ill, and Madame de Mailly was furious. The question of committing the poet to the Bastille was seriously considered. Madame du Châtelet, receiving early notice of this, made immediate preparations for a journey to Brussels by the diligence; but Voltaire preserved his composure more successfully. Before taking so extreme a step, he determined to try what effect an audacious denial, accompanied by genuflexions to the prelate and compliments to the favourite, would produce. Accordingly it was at the feet of Madame de Mailly herself that he laid the following petition, in which dignity and truthfulness were equally displayed :—

"Madame, I have learned with the deepest concern that a letter of mine to the King of Prussia, in which the expressions are falsified, is in circulation. If I had written it such as it has been cruelly pub-

lished, and such as it has, it is said, reached your hands, I should merit your indignation; but if you knew, Madame, what has been the nature of my intercourse with the King of Prussia for the last six years, you would be truly indignant at the injustice which I experience, and I should be as sure of your protection as you are of being loved and esteemed by everybody. It does not become me to weary you with details on the subject of this letter—which I have never shown to any one—and of all those of the King of Prussia. If I might one day, madame, have the honour of speaking with you for a quarter of an hour, you would find that I am a good citizen—a man attached to the King and to his country, who has resisted everything in the hope of living in France; one who cares only for friendship, society, and repose. He desires to owe that repose to you, madame. France has been more dear to him since he has the honour to present his respects to you, and his sentiments merit your patronage." At the same time he wrote to Fleury: "When your Eminence sees the letter that I wrote to the King of Prussia, and which he will send back to me verified by his own signature, you will see whether I have written that which has been cruelly imputed to me, and with what black malice it has been falsified; your Eminence will then know my innocence, and the infamous imposture under which I am crushed. I am personally attached to your Eminence, to whom no

one can have the honour to speak without being devoted."[1]

Of course, Voltaire never asked Frederick to send him back his letter duly verified. If he had, I fear it would not have served him. But, whether it was the esteem of which he assured Madame de Mailly, or the personal attachment he professed for the Cardinal, that dispelled the storm, I do not know; one thing, however, is certain, threats died away, and there was no more talk about a *lettre de cachet.* "Nothing will happen to Voltaire," wrote President Hénault, "for the same reason that nothing has happened to the Queen of Hungary; just because no decision is come to." Tongues were not stopped, however, and two points in particular continued to be widely discussed. Was the letter really Voltaire's, or had it been falsified and forged, as he repeated to all comers with an air of transparent sincerity? If it was false, who was the unknown forger? If it was true, who was the unknown betrayer? On the first point connoisseurs pronounced unhesitatingly. "The letter is undoubtedly Voltaire's," wrote the witty Marquise du Deffand. "No one could have so completely mastered all his turns of phrase as to imitate them so perfectly. *Un petit citoyen fait de petites choses*—how should any one else invent that, do you suppose? This single phrase

[1] Voltaire to Madame de Mailly, July 13, 1742. To Cardinal de Fleury, August 22, 1742. (*Correspondance générale.*)

alone makes it impossible to be mistaken. But how the letter got into circulation," adds the Marquise du Deffand, "seems to me supernatural." [2]

Voltaire was relieved from his apprehensions, but he was none the less puzzled; he was as much at a loss as every one else, to conceive how his letter could have escaped from Frederick's pocket-book, and fallen, as it were, from the skies into the middle of Paris.

"God and the devil," he wrote to Frederick, "know what has become of the letter which I wrote to your Majesty at the end of last June, and how it has fallen into other hands. I am so constituted myself that I never see to the bottom of anything. I have been played one of the most famous tricks in the world; but I am so good a cosmopolitan that I will make the best of it all."

Frederick, in reply, endeavoured to persuade him that neither God nor the devil had done the mischief, but simply a post-clerk, and Voltaire made a pretence of believing him. But the explanation was not explanatory, for, even supposing (which is most improbable) that Voltaire had not taken any precaution against the perfectly well-known insecurity of the post at that time, and admitting (which is certain) that in such a case the letter would have been conveyed direct to the Cardinal, we cannot see what purpose Fleury had to serve by giving useless

[2] President Hénault to Madame du Deffand, July 3, 1742. Madame du Deffand to President Hénault, July 17, 1742.

publicity to the sarcasms that were aimed against himself. The latest biographer of Voltaire does not hesitate to advance another hypothesis, which, if it be more strange at a first glance, is much more probable. He boldly affirms that it was Frederick himself, who, in order to draw Voltaire to his Court, and to force him to leave France in spite of the tears of Madame du Châtelet, devised this means of rendering his stay in Paris impossible. Knowing Frederick as we now know him, we recognize that the conjecture is probable, and the feat is such a fine one that it is a pity it is not proved.[3]

We must suppose that this "famous trick," as Voltaire calls it, was a singularly painful remembrance to him all his life long, for only thus can a gap in his "Siècle de Louis XV."—which but for that circumstance would be incomprehensible—be explained. One can hardly believe that in a narrative so remarkable for a precise exposition and a rigorously correct sequence of events one fact is passed over in silence, and that the very fact which gave the author first so much pleasure, and afterwards so much trouble—the peace concluded with

[3] Desnoirsterres, *Voltaire et la Société au dix-huitième siècle*, vol. ii. pp. 330 and following. Voltaire to Frederick, July, 1743. Frederick to Voltaire, August 7, 1742. (*Correspondance générale.*) I am, however, bound to say that Chambrier, in his correspondence with the King of Prussia, evinces as much surprise as everybody else at the publication of Voltaire's letter. He asserts that it was spread throughout Paris by the agency of the Bavarian Minister, Prince Grimberghe.

Maria Theresa by Frederick without any co-operation with his allies, or the slightest care for them. I have sought in vain for any allusion whatsoever to this all-important incident, at the date at which mention of it would have been necessary, were it only to render the succession of events intelligible. I would be glad that another should succeed in the search where I have failed, so difficult have I found it to believe my eyes. Frederick, at war with Maria Theresa in the sixth chapter, is found at peace with her in the ninth, without the narrator's having taken the trouble to tell us at what moment and under what conditions concord between the two sovereigns was restored. If this be merely an oversight, it is certainly one of the strangest that has ever been committed by a historian.

Voltaire's silence is to be regretted for several reasons; among others, because it leaves us in ignorance of his opinion upon certain points which he could have handled with authority, being so well informed as he was. It would be interesting to know, for instance, what he thought of the sole excuse alleged by Frederick to justify his conduct with respect to his allies. We know in what that justification consisted: to the actual reproaches of his contemporaries and the anticipated blame of posterity, Frederick has made answer that if he quitted France in the field, it was because France was ready to play him the same trick, and that he would have been

sacrificed, had he not been beforehand with her by a reprisal in advance that was only an act of legitimate defence. Dealing with cheats, he had to pay them beforehand in their own coin, if he would not be their dupe. What foundation is there for such an allegation? I have had the curiosity to elucidate this delicate point by means of all the information to be extracted by a process of the strictest critical examination from the original documents. I set much store upon establishing the truth, less perhaps for the sake of a perfect comprehension of facts and characters, than for that of proving how strange is the manner in which we are taught the history of the eighteenth century; by catching it, so to speak, *in flagrante delicto*.

How many historians, for instance, even of the present day, will give us the following little anecdote as vouched for and authentic: "At the affair of Chotusitz, the Austrian general, Pallandt (they go so far as to name him), was made prisoner on the field of battle. Frederick having paid him a visit of courtesy, the Austrian expressed his desire for a speedy conclusion of the peace, and warned him that if he did not hasten to proceed with it himself, he would be outstripped by France. The King having asked for proof of his assertion, a courier was sent to Vienna on the demand of Frederick, and less than six days after (here the exact time is stated) he brought back the original text of a letter

from Cardinal Fleury, by which that prelate offered Maria Theresa to enable her to recover Silesia, if she would give the Emperor a sufficient share in Bohemia. It was then that Frederick, being indignant, resolved to sign the peace himself in all haste, and when Belle-Isle came to the Prussian camp to reproach him with his breach of faith, the King shut his mouth by showing him the accusing document: the Marshal withdrew in confusion without saying a word.[4]

This pretty little story, which the celebrated English writer, Mr. Carlyle, and M. Michelet, after him, have not hesitated to repeat, was in circulation, no doubt, among those about Frederick; since it was Thiébaut, one of his associates, who for the first time imparted it to the public in his "Souvenirs de Vingt Ans." But Frederick himself never ventured to make mention of it, either in the pamphlets which he had published in his defence, or in his famous history. He knew too well that the least insinuation of this kind would receive a categorical denial from the mere fact that Belle-Isle, after the peace of Breslau, neither went to the Prussian camp

[4] The following is taken from Michelet's history of Louis XV. "The treaty was imminent; Belle-Isle hastens to Frederick, and in his despair flies into a passion. Frederick coolly takes out of his pocket the letters which Fleury has written to Austria, offering to forsake Prussia, and to have Silesia restored, if the Emperor has Bohemia. Shameful letters in which the dotard confided his secret grievances to the enemy: Versailles is unmasked and disgraced." It would be hard to put so many mis-statements into so few words.

nor had any interview or explanation with any one whomsoever! If there were any necessity for adding a further negative proof to this material impossibility, that proof is supplied by Belle-Isle's own silence upon an incident which, if it had taken place, could not have escaped his memory, and which it would not have been his interest to conceal. Writing as he wrote, long after Fleury had vanished from the scene, and speaking with the freedom which one uses when facing death and posterity—anxious beyond all things to clear himself of the misfortunes that had been brought upon his country by his enterprise—he unhesitatingly casts the entire blame upon Fleury's slowness, vacillation, and weakness; if he could have charged him with blundering perfidy as well, we may be sure he would not have failed to add so great a grievance to his indictment of the Cardinal. Lastly, let me record here that nothing of the kind is alleged by any of the German historians of our time. They leave it to French historians to pick up the falsehoods which they reject.[5]

The assertion put forward by Frederick himself

[5] See in particular the collection of official papers published in Berlin under the title of *Preussische Staatschriften*, vol. i. p. 334. This collection contains a document entitled *Lettre du Comte de —— à son Ami*, which is simply a justification of Frederick, written by himself, and published by his agents in Holland. The author of the collection calls attention, at the head of this document, to the fact that there is no mention in it of the anecdote relating to General Pallandt. See also Droysen, vol. i. p. 455.

is of another nature, and more difficult to meet. He maintains in his "Mémoires" (as he had already affirmed to Valori) that the Cardinal kept a secret agent at Vienna, of the name of Fargis or Dufargis, who was commissioned to carry on a surreptitious negotiation with Maria Theresa. He asserts that Lord Hyndford has due and timely warning of this fact sent to him. Fleury, who was informed by Valori of the imputation, met it with an absolute denial. "Nothing is more false," wrote the Cardinal to Belle-Isle on the 21st of June; "the pretended Fargis is a commissariat-agent, who was indeed employed in 1735 about some business relating to the last peace, but no use has ever been made of him since, and I should be very much puzzled to tell what he is now doing."

I have had to conduct an inquiry, like an examining magistrate (*juge d'instruction*), between these two conflicting statements, and I have availed myself of the practice that I acquired by my former studies of the secret diplomacy of Louis XV. All researches made, I am bound to declare that, if any such negotiation did take place, its secrecy was indeed inviolate, for no trace of it has remained in the most hidden corners of our archives. I have not found a single mention in any document of the name of Fargis or Dufargis. Similar prudence must also have been observed at Vienna, for the precise and thoroughly-informed M. d'Arneth

makes no mention anywhere of any negotiation being proposed by Fleury to Maria Theresa at that time. On the other hand, we find in almost every page of the correspondence of the chargé-d'affaires whom France still maintained at Vienna offers of negotiation made in the name of the Queen by more or less authorized emissaries, and invariably rejected by Fleury with a sort of terror. The fear of being accused of duplicity by Frederick seems to be the aged Minister's predominant feeling.[1]

We come to the last grievance alleged by Frederick: he asserts that it was brought to his knowledge that the French Envoy to St. Petersburg, M. de Chétardie, making himself a mediator between Russia and Sweden, was endeavouring to unite them against Prussia by promising a share of the Prussian possessions to each of the parties in compensation for the sacrifices that would have to be made. I have also patiently perused the whole of Chétardie's correspondence, and I have vainly sought for anything bearing any resemblance whatsoever to this strange imputation. In any case, at the epoch of the conclusion of the peace by Frederick, the gallant

[1] Fleury to Belle-Isle, June 21, 1742. (*Correspondance de l'Ambassade auprès de la Diète.*) Ministry of Foreign Affairs. See, also, in the *Correspondance de Vienne*, Vincent to Amelot, January 31, February 17, March 16, 1742, for the various attempts to open private negotiations, made by the agents of Maria Theresa, and always repulsed. See an extract from these various documents in the Appendix to this volume (G.).

ambassador was no longer in the enjoyment of the favour of the fickle sovereign whom he had placed on the throne; the mediation which he had offered had been refused, and he was preparing to leave St. Petersburg in disgrace. Frederick had, therefore, no serious cause for apprehension on that side.

Of the second and third count in the indictment, there remains, then, no more than of the first. But, supposing (what there is nothing to confirm) that Fleury did maintain a timid and secret agent at Vienna whose business it was to sound the designs of Maria Theresa and detect the dissensions of her Council, what was to be made out of an act as innocent as it was insignificant? What resemblance did this little police manœuvre—quite usual in diplomacy, perhaps useful to the common cause—bear to the continuous, almost official negotiation, that we have followed through all its details, unremittingly carried on by Frederick without the knowledge and at the expense of his allies; now suspended, again resumed, but always kept in working order, and indeed placed on a parallel line with his military operations, so that at any moment he could choose between peace and war, at the instigation of his fancy or his personal interest? And what is to be said about those Austrian troops who twice escaped from the hands of the conqueror with full permission to fall on the rear of the French, and crush them? How is that

unprecedented act—unparalleled except by the defection on the field of battle—to be excused by the more or less well-founded suspicion of some true or false intrigue planned in a minister's cabinet at Versailles? In truth, it needed all Frederick's audacity to put forward such a comparison as his authorization, as it needs all the folly of our writers to accept it.

Let it be granted that nothing in these baseless charges affords even the semblance of a justification of the Prussian defection; there was, however, another position which Frederick might have taken up, if not with more advantage to himself, at least to the disadvantage of his former allies. By taking a more peremptory tone, and displaying his character with frankness—from which he seldom shrank—he might have shut the mouth of France and left her without a plea. "In what have I deceived you?" he might have said to her; "did not the outset of my kingly career warn you to be on your guard?" A sovereign who, as his first act, enters a peaceful province in arms without a pretext, and under favour of a quibble, to despoil a defenceless woman, the daughter of his benefactor, has surely himself fixed the standard of the value to be attached to his word? When he had so little scruple in seizing upon the possessions of others, was it to be supposed that he would be more squeamish in the choice of means for their safe-

keeping? And France, who herself had violated the solemn pledges of a recent treaty, that she might associate herself with his iniquitous aggression, had she not forfeited, by that very act, her right to summon either friends or adversaries to respect a sworn compact? At Fleury's age, was there not downright absurdity in his complaint that he was either the dupe or the victim of one whose accomplice he had not refused to be?

This is the political and moral teaching that may be derived from the facts whose course and sequence I have traced, by regarding them from a more general and a more extended point of view. The continuation will render it still more evident to the perception of those who may have patience to study its development. It was not for the passing hour only, or for the issue of a single war, that France, by associating herself with Frederick's ambition, instead of crushing it in the germ, had dealt a blow, for which she could blame none but herself, to her own interests and her future greatness; it was for a far-reaching future. In that old Europe, where she had enjoyed undisputed sway, she had not only left a new power which could henceforth disturb the general equilibrium by casting its sword into either of the two scales of the balance, but she had fostered it. She had opened an era of spoliation and conquest which, beginning at Silesia, and extending to Poland, has been per-

petuated to our time, throughout the vicissitudes of our revolutions, and from which we have suffered the most of all. . Such has been the consequence—remote indeed, but very direct—of an initiatory action which was even more imprudent than it was disloyal. The chastisement, however severe, may appear to be deserved. But, although it is easy to perceive what the fault was for which France was then punished, it is difficult to discern the virtues to which reward was meted. Fleury and Frederick were both guilty of the same misdeed, although in different degrees, and it seems strange to us that the one should reap the fruit of his audacity, while the other paid the heavy penalty of his weakness. Such contrasts in the confused picture of human affairs are not of rare occurrence. Providence does not reveal to us the mysterious purposes of those severe dispensations which, to our finite minds, sometimes seem uncalled-for and unequal. Happily, if our faith in the justice of Providence be thus tried, it is also confirmed and strengthened in unexpected and striking ways. The narrative which we have been studying affords us an example of this; for, if lovers of right are afflicted by the prosperity of wrong-doers, the noble example of Maria Theresa, who retrieved the fortunes of the cause of innocence and weakness by her intrepidity, consoles the troubled conscience, and avenges the morality of history.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX TO VOL. II.

A.

THE ENTRY OF THE FRENCH TROOPS INTO THE EMPIRE.

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

(*Correspondance de l'Ambassade auprès de la Diète.*)

MARSHAL BELLE-ISLE TO AMELOT.

August 4, 1741.

"I FOUND great commotion here, on account of the rumour of the entry of an army belonging to the King into the Empire. All the creatures of the House of Austria sound the alarm, and endeavour to excite both small and great against this step, giving it to be understood that the King is about to lay hold of the fortresses and strongholds of the Empire, and force the electoral votes. . . . My return has begun to calm the public mind, for it had been given out that I would not come back any more, and that I was going to command the army of Bavaria, so that it was already said that the election was not to be followed up, since the King withdrew his Ambassador to make war.

"You will see by the accompanying article from the *Frankfort Gazette* which I have marked with a pencil, that the Austrian army has been raised to 83,000 men, composed of barbarous people, which the Court

of Vienna introduces into the Empire, and this fully authorizes the Elector in calling Frenchmen to his aid."

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

(*Correspondance de l'Ambassade auprès de la Diète.*)

MARSHAL BELLE-ISLE TO CARDINAL FLEURY.

August 22, 1741.

"The attachment to the House of Austria is general. It is impossible to uproot the prejudices of this country against France. Half the people still believe that we are going to lay hold of Philisbourg, and that they will hear of its being taken one day; but the wiser are agreed that if the King continues to be thus inactive towards the Empire, while his troops pay ready money for all the supplies that they may have willingly furnished to them, and no advantage is taken of their weakness to seize possession of Philisbourg and Kehl, after such conduct the consideration of his Majesty and the rectitude of his intentions cannot be doubted."

B.

The March of the Allied Armies in September, 1741.

The subjoined documents enable us to see what were the motives which led the allied armies to renounce their march upon Vienna in 1741, and how entirely Voltaire is mistaken in attributing that resolution to a selfish calculation on the part of Cardinal Fleury.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

(*Correspondance de Bavière.*)

MARSHAL BELLE-ISLE TO AMELOT.

Frankfort, August 25, 1741.

"With respect to Bavaria, I am ashamed that the alarm of the Electress should decide the march and the operation of our troops. The Elector knows better than any one that the Austrians coming from Italy cannot yet be at the gates of Bavaria, and that he has, consequently, plenty of time to send his national troops."

Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

(*Correspondance de Bavière.*)

MARSHAL BELLE-ISLE TO AMELOT.

Frankfort, October 4, 1741.

"Whose patience could hold out against such con-

duct on the part of both chiefs and subalterns? . . . I confess to you that, were I a less amiable person than I am, I should already have despatched a courier to Versailles, to beg the King to send any general he pleased to the head of his army, because, as I cannot work at the same time at the most important negotiation that the monarchy has ever had, I must devote myself entirely to that. I have declared as much, as you know, to his Majesty himself, to the Cardinal, and to all the assembled ministry. I have not chosen the person to command in my absence; that will be for the Court to provide for; notwithstanding my abdication of the command, which is the greatest sacrifice that I can make, I undertook to charge myself with the passage and subsistence of the troops from the kingdom to Bavaria, because that has a direct bearing on political affairs, so as to endeavour to prevent a general association of the circles; and I set to work, taking inexpressible care and pains, which have worked so well that our troops have needed nothing, and have conducted themselves so well, and with such discipline, that they have been the surprise and admiration of all the Empire, and the effect which I expected has been produced. I have also arranged a general plan for the best with the Elector; everything has been done by us, and the result is, that, without being obliged, willing, or indeed able to do it, I have been led to embark in a detailed correspondence which has led me much farther than I intended.

"But I hoped that at least matters would amend on the spot itself, and I see, with most poignant regret, that, in great things as well as in the smallest details,

all is going from bad to worse. I have nothing more to say, and I beg of you to put yourself in my place for a moment. But although I am alive to the danger of being involved in a business that is so badly managed, still I do not want to throw the helve away after the hatchet. Yet I must at least be able to feel confident henceforth that what has been undertaken by us will be duly carried out; for it is now the 5th of October, and it would be the depth of disgrace, if in the sight of all Europe, with our ally the King of Prussia with his 45,000 men before Neisse, pitted against Neipperg who has not 30,000, 18,000 Saxons that I have just obtained, 40,000 French, and 20,000 Bavarians, who are opposed by only 5000 or 6000 men in Bohemia, and by 10,000 or 12,000 round Vienna, we failed to take Prague and to establish ourselves in good winter-quarters in Bohemia, Moravia, and Austria. But this is what I foresee, if matters continue during October to be managed as they have been managed in September."

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

(*Correspondance de Bavière.*)

MARSHAL BELLE-ISLE TO THE ELECTOR.

Frankfort, October 14, 1741.

"I perceive, by the two letters of the 29th and 30th which I have had the honour of receiving from your Electoral Highness, that you have at length decided on relinquishing the idea of besieging Vienna. I am well aware that the King of Prussia advises this, and I myself was the first to approve it, for it would

have been in every way more glorious, of greater use, and both more easy and more certain of execution than the siege of Prague, provided we could have commenced action two months sooner, and that your Serene Electoral Highness had possessed all the necessary artillery and provisions for a siege of such importance—not on account of the fortifications, but because we are bound to believe that the Queen of Hungary would make every effort to defend and support her capital, which is her last resource. The alliance with Saxony should also have been entered into sooner, and, finally, the King of Prussia should have seriously joined in the project and concerted his movements and operations accordingly. But none of these things have taken place; a different plan has been followed; undertakings such as these cannot and must not be attempted on chance, for there must be failure unless they have been carefully considered beforehand, and that all things have been prepared in like manner."

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

(*Correspondance de Bavière.*)

MARSHAL BELLE-ISLE TO THE ELECTOR.

Frankfort, October 23, 1741.

"The King of Prussia was bent on taking Neisse, and, finding himself unable to dislodge M. de Neipperg, he wanted us, at any cost, to direct our movements upon Vienna. I perceived his meaning from the very first, and in some letters I had occasion to write to him I opposed the advice he was giving you to march upon Vienna, and defended your

Electoral Highness when blamed for not having done so; I advanced on these points a number of unanswerable arguments.

"But now that he is rid of Neipperg, he will not trouble himself much about your difficulties . . . . he will make no great effort to support any military movement. Yet while I have the honour of thus speaking to you of the King of Prussia, I exonerate him fully with regard to an alleged understanding with the Queen of Hungary, and I know not how your Electoral Highness can have for one moment credited the reports contained in letters from Vienna."

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

(*Correspondance de Bavière.*)

THE MARQUIS DE BEAUVAU TO AMELOT.

October 23, 1741.

"I admit that the fears entertained for Munich proceed from panic; for though the place is of no account, it is absurd to think that the Austrians will blindly push forward, running the risk of being snowed up in the Tyrol, and dragging with them sufficient artillery for a siege, although an inconsiderable one. I repeat all this daily to the Elector, but, nevertheless, I fear that on the merest rumour he will detach more French troops."

C.

Protocol of Klein-Schnellendorf.

Protokoll des Grossbritannischen Ministers Lord Hyndford über die Vereinbarungen von Klein-Schnellendorf.

October 9, 1741.

"I, the undersigned, Earl of Hyndford, Minister Plenipotentiary of his Majesty the King of Great Britain, having been witness of that which his Majesty the King of Prussia has been pleased to declare out of his own mouth and on his royal word to Marshal Count Neipperg, in presence of Major-General Lentulus, and of that which the said Marshal Count Neipperg has declared in the name of her Majesty the Queen of Hungary and Bohemia, do attest by these presents, on the public faith and my duty as Minister, that it has been agreed on either side:—

"1. That the King of Prussia is at liberty to take the town of Neisse by laying siege to it.

"2. That the Commandant of the town of Neisse shall receive orders to sustain a siege of fifteen days' duration and then to surrender the said town to the Prussian troops.

"3. That the garrison of Neisse and all appertaining to it shall march out with military honours;

that the necessary transport shall be provided so far as the Moravian frontiers; that no one belonging to the garrison shall be persuaded or obliged to serve in the army of his Prussian Majesty; and that all civilians wishing to withdraw shall be allowed to accompany the said garrison in safety.

"4. The metal guns in the town or on the ramparts of Neisse shall remain the property of her Majesty the Queen of Hungary and Bohemia, and shall be faithfully restored to her on the conclusion of the treaty or when peace shall be made.

"5. That, after the capitulation of Neisse, his Majesty the King of Prussia will not act further on the offensive against her Majesty the Queen of Hungary and Bohemia, or against the King of England as Elector of Hanover, or any present ally of the Queen until the general peace.

"6. That the King of Prussia shall never demand more from her Hungarian Majesty than Lower Silesia and the town of Neisse.

"7. That endeavours shall be made towards a final treaty in the coming month of December.

"8. Marshal Count Neipperg has declared in the name of her Majesty the Queen of Hungary and Bohemia that her Hungarian Majesty will cede to his Prussian Majesty without difficulty, by a treaty to be made towards the end of next December, the whole of Lower Silesia as far as the river Neisse, including the town of Neisse, and on the other side of the Oder, as far as the ordinary limits of the Duchy of Oppeln, with complete sovereignty and independence of all and every one whomsoever.

"9. That on the 16th of the present month the

said Marshal Count Neipperg shall retreat with all his army on Moravia, and thence whithersoever he will.

"10. That the castle of Ottmachau shall be evacuated at the same time that the Queen's troops shall withdraw.

"11. That Marshal Neipperg shall be allowed to remove into Moravia, or elsewhere, the magazines that he established at the foot of the mountains, until the 20th of the present month of October.

"12. That part of the King of Prussia's army shall be quartered for the winter in Upper Silesia, until the end of April, 1742.

"13. That the Principality of Teschen, the town of Troppau, and what is beyond the river of Oppau, with the high mountain ranges elsewhere than in Upper Silesia, likewise the Lordship of Hennersdorf, shall not be included in those winter quarters, and that Marshal Count Neipperg shall leave one battalion and some hussars to garrison the said town of Troppau.

"14. That the troops of his Prussian Majesty shall demand nothing of the inhabitants of the country beyond shelter and forage.

"15. That the troops of the King of Prussia shall make no requisition of money from any one of the States of the Queen of Hungary.

"16. That under no pretext whatsoever shall any recruit be enrolled against his will.

"17. That there shall be some feigned sorties on either side, in order to continue hostilities *pro forma*, and that, during the winter, a line of action shall be concerted for the ensuing spring, in case the

treaty or a general peace should not be concluded before that time.

"18. That these present articles, now agreed upon, shall be held inviolably secret, as I, the undersigned Earl of Hyndford, Marshal Count Neipperg, and Major General Lentulus, have promised on our word of honour to the King of Prussia, at his request.

"In faith of which I have signed these present eighteen articles, and have affixed the seal of my arms at the request of his Majesty the King of Prussia and of the said Marshal Count Neipperg. At the castle of Klein-Schnellendorf, this 9th day of October, 1741.

(L.S.) "HYNDFORD."

From the original (German).

D.

EFFECT OF THE CONVENTION OF KLEIN-SCHNELLENDORF.

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

(*Correspondance de l'Ambassade auprès de la Diète.*)

MARSHAL BELLE-ISLE TO AMELOT.

Frankfort, October 25, 1741.

"THE Elector dares not advance. After the blunders that have been made, I can no longer answer for anything. You are quite right to exhort me to keep my temper when forced to listen to all the extravagances of all the Electoral Ministers. As you may have remarked, I made this my rule from the first. The intimate terms on which I am with them, and the consideration and confidence that I have won for myself, put me in a position to speak with decision without giving them offence. In general, I conclude a conversation on this subject by telling them they have lost their heads."

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

(*Correspondance de l'Ambassade auprès de la Diète.*)

MARSHAL BELLE-ISLE TO AMELOT.

Frankfort, October 17, 1741.

"The King of Prussia has gone into winter quarters

without following up Neipperg. He could do no greater injury to the Elector of Bavaria and to the common cause.

"He sets Neipperg free either to return into Bohemia or else to march towards the Danube and there collect together all the Queen of Hungary's troops, and thus prevent the siege of Prague, or if the Elector is before Prague with his chief force and the Saxon troops in addition, then Neipperg might march up the banks of the Danube, and cut off all communication between that river and the troops stationed in Bohemia. The precious time that has been squandered by the Elector makes the action of the King of Prussia still more important and dangerous, and nothing can prove more plainly the mortifications that an alliance with that sovereign must entail, so long as military operations have to be concerted and carried out in common with him. If it were possible to admit suspicions of the honesty and uprightness of the King, they would arise on every side. One thing is true; the minds of all men have changed since a fortnight ago. I have received thirty letters from different parts of Europe, and those persons most attached to the King and the Elector are either intimidated, or shaken in their allegiance, while the Austrians are heartened, and firmly convinced that the King of Prussia has come to an understanding with their Queen. I have heard some curious details as to this. But how can I feel surprise, since I find that the Elector of Bavaria was himself the first to be alarmed on the point? The idea is less prevalent at Frankfort than elsewhere, because I am here and

express myself so strongly to the contrary, that the falsehoods of the Court of Vienna spread by M. de Brandeau find no acceptance. He, who was so reserved, and led so retired a life, has resumed a certain activity. He is always coming and going, assuring every one with the greatest confidence that the affairs of his mistress the Queen of Hungary wear quite another aspect, and that the King of Prussia has at last consented to pledge himself towards her; the same manœuvres are carried on and the same speeches made at Dresden. . . . This, sir, is all I can tell you for or against the present conduct of the King of Prussia. His own desire to go to Berlin, his soldiers' impatience to get into winter quarters, his natural levity, his wish to possess Glatz, the confidence inspired by his position, and perhaps a feeling of jealousy lest the Elector's campaign should be too prosperous; all these things have had their share in influencing his recent conduct, which is not the less deplorable in every respect; but I cannot entertain the idea that he has carried his insincerity so far as to come to an understanding with the Queen of Hungary. Such conduct would be neither natural nor probable."

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

(*Correspondance de l'Ambassade auprès de la Diète.*)

AMELOT TO MARSHAL BELLE-ISLE.

October 30, 1741.

"I will only say one word on other matters. The King of Prussia's conduct is in all respects inexcus-

able, and I only hope that his insincerity may go no farther than what we witness to-day. M. de Neipperg's retreat will give rise to many conjectures. I have received positive and trustworthy information from Vienna, that the Queen of Hungary sent word (of the signed treaty) to M. Wasner with commands to keep it a profound secret. It has already leaked out that the treaty is very disadvantageous to the Queen of Hungary, inasmuch as the King of Prussia has not engaged himself to take her part, but only to remain neutral."

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

(*Correspondance de Saxe.*)

DESALLEURS TO AMELOT.

Dresden, October 30, 1741.

"A Saxon officer has just arrived here, who has been for a long time in Neipperg's camp, and was informed by that General that peace had been concluded. Marshal Neipperg had been closeted for three hours with the King of Prussia, after which he had raised his camp and forbidden the Austrian hussars to commit any act of hostility.

"This officer, to make the thing altogether touching and pathetic, offers to forfeit his head if peace is not made."

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

(*Correspondance de l'Ambassade auprès de la Diète.*)

AMELOT TO MARSHAL BELLE-ISLE.

November 2, 1741.

"Even if the King of Prussia has made terms, at

the worst he would remain neutral; for I do not believe he intends or would dare to declare himself against us . . . . especially having an army of 40,000 men on the frontier. The more I dwell on the various ideas that may present themselves to that sovereign, the more convinced I feel that it is impossible he can have come to terms of reconciliation with the Court of Vienna. With such a disposition as his, we must not always seek sound reasons for his actions; he may be unaware of all the injury he is doing himself by his recent line of conduct, because he fancies success certain, and he may have adopted that line in a moment of ill-temper."

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

(*Correspondance de Prusse.*)

THE KING OF PRUSSIA TO HIS AMBASSADORS AT FRANKFORT.

Breslau, November 4, 1741.

"Having remarked that the news is industriously spread in all the Courts of Europe, that I had made a private peace with the Court of Vienna, with circumstances added that give it an air of probability, and not being able to regard this rumour otherwise than as an artifice of my enemies to sow distrust between my allies and myself, my intention is that you contradict these reports where you are, and that you insinuate, in every quarter where you shall think it desirable, that not only the rumour concerning the peace in question is utterly false, distorted in every circumstance, and destitute of all foundation but that, moreover, I am firmly resolved never to

come to terms with the Court of Vienna, except in concert and jointly with my allies, and to entertain no proposition that might tend to divide me from them."

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

(*Correspondance de l'Ambassade auprès de la Diète.*)

MARSHAL BELLE-ISLE TO AMELOT.

Frankfort, November 5, 1741.

"I am very glad to see that your opinion of the current reports as to the alleged engagement entered into by the King of Prussia is the same as mine. I cannot conceive that he would have been so faithless as to make such a treaty, while under his present engagements to the King, and at the very moment that he has acceded to and guaranteed those of Bavaria with Saxony."

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

(*Correspondance de Hollande.*)

THE MARQUIS DE FÉNÉLON TO AMELOT.

The Hague, November 2, 1741.

"Our correspondents continue to state that it is the King of Prussia who is playing false. I learn also that M. de Raasfeld holds exactly the same language in private as in public, and lays much stress on what he derives directly from the King his master. The gleams which announced that neutrality was sought have faded away."

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

(*Correspondance de l'Ambassade auprès de la Diète.*)

AMELOT TO MARSHAL BELLE-ISLE.

November 8, 1741.

"Although I feel convinced that nothing can be more untrue than the alleged treaty between the King of Prussia and the Queen of Hungary, I tremble every moment lest he escape us. It is natural to judge of others by oneself; he is in continual alarm that France wants to make peace, and if unfortunately this opinion becomes confirmed in his imagination, he will believe he is acting wisely and prudently in being beforehand with us. . . . Belief in the treaty with the Queen of Hungary continues as strong as ever. You will even be surprised to hear that the Court of Vienna, in order to confirm that belief, has deceived its own Ministers, and that on the occasion of M. Koch's last conference with you, he had orders to seek a pretext for breaking off the negotiation, had you appeared disposed to follow his lead, and his new orders were founded on the treaty that has just been concluded."

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

(*Correspondance de l'Ambassade auprès de la Diète.*)

MARSHAL BELLE-ISLE TO AMELOT.

Frankfort, November 8, 1741.

"The King of Prussia signs his adherence to the Treaty of Bavaria; but you will have heard at the same time of the taking of Neisse. The attack on that town, its defence and its surrender, are all of a

nature to confirm the connivance that the Court of Vienna asserts, and which is believed in by the whole Prussian army. He signs the treaty of November 4 at the same time that he sees the Elector harassed and perhaps in danger, and will not move a single soldier, not even to make a diversion of the easiest and least perilous nature."

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

(*Correspondance de Saxe.*)

DESALLEURS TO AMELOT.

Dresden, October 30, 1714.

"You could scarcely believe the credulity with which the fiction of an understanding with the Queen of Hungary is received here; what strengthens it most is the inaction of the King of Prussia since Neipperg's retreat on Moravia. The Nuncio, most Austrian of all Nuncios, told me yesterday, at the royal supper-table, that the King of Prussia was deceiving the King and Queen of Hungary. I replied that I thought it was neither the one nor the other, but that the Queen of Hungary was endeavouring to deceive herself."

E.

Relations of the King of Prussia with Marshal de Broglie.

The following extracts prove that I have exaggerated nothing by attributing a real and deplorable influence over the course of events to Frederick's inexplicable antipathy to the commander-in-chief of the French army.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

(*Correspondance de Bavière.*)

Amelot to marshal de broglie.

December 14.

"Hasten the conclusion of the war. We have the Kings of Prussia and Poland for allies, and if either of them fail us, we should remain exposed. The King of Poland is timid and suspicious, and totally dependent on the Queen, who will make continual efforts to detach him from France. The King of Prussia is not over-scrupulous as to the observance of treaties, he is overbearing and imperious, and must be skilfully managed, as he is guided exclusively by his own interest, and will show consideration to his allies just in proportion to his belief that they are able to do without him. Hence we must expect that if our situation remain

doubtful at the opening of the ensuing campaign he will order all things as master, and will make us pay dearly for his help. I wish, indeed, that we may have nothing worse than this to fear. The following trait will help you to form an opinion on his character. The blunders of the Elector of Bavaria have cost him the Principality of Glatz. The King of Prussia would never have ventured to put forth a claim to it, had he felt more respect for the Elector: he despises him and has set his foot on his throat, because he believed he could do so with impunity, and because he knew the need there was of his help. But hardly had he heard of the fall of Prague than all his ideas were changed; he bestowed a gift on the person who brought him the news, and I mention this as an unusual and singular act on the part of a sovereign who carries economy to a very high degree. He wanted to give the title of "Majesty" to the Elector in a letter he was writing to him. He at once gave orders that two hundred of the four hundred crowns he had promised him on taking possession of Glatz should be paid over; he despatched troops to join with ours; he instructed his Minister at Hanover to act in all things in concert with M. de Bussi, and he talks of nothing but intended campaigns to push the Queen of Hungary to extremity; but all these fine purposes would soon fade away, if success did not attend his expectations. You see, then, by what I have laid before you, that our situation, though apparently brilliant and an object of envy to all Europe, depends, nevertheless, on a concurrence of circumstances which the slightest event may frustrate, and that at no time

has it been more necessary to make use of our present advantages by carrying on military operations with all prudent despatch. . . . His Eminence thinks that you should, as soon as possible, write a civil letter to the King of Prussia. You are aware that he placed perfect reliance on Marshal Belle-Isle; it is much to be desired that he may accord the same to you."

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

(*Correspondance de Bavière.*)

THE MARQUIS DE BEAUVAU TO CARDINAL FLEURY.

December 15, 1741.

"I consider that I should fail in my duty toward the King and the state, did I not remind your Eminence that Marshal de Broglie is not agreeable to the King of Prussia. You may remember that the King made serious complaints of the manner in which Broglie had received him at Strasburg, and that he was aware that the Marshal wished to have him arrested. He mentioned the subject to me a dozen times at Berlin, with the resentment of a man who does not easily forget. Your Eminence must know that he acts on impulse and from temper. . . . His fancies cannot diminish in any way the merit of Marshal de Broglie, whom I respect as highly as any one, but they cause a certain incompatibility whose consequences your Eminence may perhaps regret. I should be glad if my ideas were to prove as much mistaken as they have hitherto been accurate."

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

(*Correspondance de Prusse.*)

MARSHAL BELLE-ISLE TO THE MARQUIS DE VALORI.

Prague, December 20, 1741.

"The news of my illness arrived before the taking of Prague, and occasioned the departure of Marshal de Broglie. I believe that it is now much regretted, as his own health is not very good, and you know there are other reasons which I do not mention in this letter. But among them is one that the Cardinal has not noticed, and to which I have not paid attention; it is this: Marshal de Broglie will be very displeasing to the King of Prussia. That sovereign was greatly dissatisfied with his behaviour on the occasion of his visit to Strasburg, and is not ignorant that the Marshal was on the point of having him arrested. I was told by M. de Beauvau that he speaks of him with furious anger, and at the same time with utter contempt as regards military ability; hence it may be that the King will take the selection of a general with whom he will not consult or act in concert very ill, and serious injury may ensue to the common cause. . . . It is very possible that M. de Broglie may only remain here for the winter, as he knows my health is improving, and in fact I am feeling better every day."

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

(*Correspondance de Prusse.*)

THE MARQUIS DE VALORI TO MARSHAL BELLE-ISLE.

Berlin, December 23, 1741.

[He has had an interview with the King of

Prussia.] "I told his Majesty that the principal object of your letter to me, was to make known to him the arrival of Marshal de Broglie at Prague. I added, in confidence, that I was instructed to report how this piece of news was received by him. 'You may report, my good friend,' he replied, 'that it was very badly received. I will not repeat what I said to you the other day. If you have done what I have told you, you must already have written to the Cardinal on the subject. Moreover, the Marshal knows my sentiments, and must feel assured that I shall only act in concert with him, and that I can have no dealings with others, and least of all with M. de Broglie.'"

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

(*Correspondance de Prusse.*)

CARDINAL FLEURY TO FREDERICK.

December 27, 1741.

"Marshal de Broglie was sent because Marshal de Belle-Isle declared himself unable to take part in military operations, and his presence being necessary at Frankfort (*sic*). It was incumbent on us to take measures so as not to repeat previous blunders. He was nearest to the frontier, and was fully equipped for the campaign. It was impossible to foresee the result of an escalade; if one in twenty such enterprises succeeds it is much. The direction is confided to Marshal Belle-Isle; Marshal de Broglie, will have the military operations, and the daily operations only. Marshal de Broglie is well qualified for his business; he is active, watchful, enterprising, and while in Italy inspired confidence in his men;

but I am deeply distressed to see by your Majesty's letter of the 20th inst., that he has not the good fortune to be pleasing to you. I do not think your Majesty will exact that we should recall him in undeserved disgrace, and thus ruin him in reputation. How could it be done without danger at this period, when the Austrians are still occupying Tabor, Budweiss and Freystadt? I am impatiently awaiting an account of the interview between the two Marshals. Your Majesty may rely upon it that there is not the slightest diminution of the King's confidence in M. de Belle-Isle, and that we shall always consider him as the moving power in all our designs. The phenomenon of the fall of Prague is a very important phenomenon for the common cause, and the King assents gladly to all the advice your Majesty has been pleased to give in consequence of it, so that we may reap the advantages that we have a right to expect. My respectful devotion to your royal person and my admiration for your superior abilities increase every day."

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

(*Correspondance de Saxe.*)

DESALLEURS TO AMELOT.

Dresden, July 13, 1741.

"I am the more worthy of belief, because, were I to believe my prospects to be ruined by mentioning a fact that would serve the State, I should mention it just the same. You may, therefore, monseigneur, look upon me as the more impartial with regard to that incident, both because I have spoken but once in my life to the Marshal [de Broglie], and because

I only know him by reputation. The letters from Bohemia, informing you of the ungracious reception accorded to him, must have seemed to you somewhat suspicious. His arrival took every one by surprise, but it allayed the prevailing anxiety to have some one in whom confidence might be placed, now that Marshal Belle-Isle is ill. That feeling of confidence has been justified, and candid witnesses admit that all he did at Pisek has been most useful. I can go farther, and you may believe me, that, at the rate things were going on, and with M. d'Aubigné's hesitations, the King's troops would be at the present moment under the guns of Prague but for M. de Broglie. Count de Saxe agrees with me as to this. . . . M. de Marcieux told me on his way through that it was time he joined the army, for the state of M. de Belle-Isle might occasion great misfortunes, and I was assured of all this by the Bavarian Envoy who was at that time at Prague. My letter of the 12th will have shown you that the Saxon Ministers expressed themselves after the same manner. You may be easy as to the effect of those letters, they have no influence over the Court here. Full confidence is felt, and I shall do my best to promote its continuance. One thing is certain: Marshal de Broglie found affairs in a bad state, and his present task is difficult and critical."

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

(*Correspondance de l'Ambassade auprès de la Diète.*)

MARSHAL BELLE-ISLE TO AMELOT.

Frankfort, January 20, 1742.

"I send you a copy of a letter that the King of

Prussia has done me the honour of writing to me, and I will not conceal my sincere grief at the contemptuous terms in which he speaks of Marshal de Broglie. I even hesitated before sending you copies of previous letters that I had received from the King, and I only transmitted them because it is my duty not to hide anything from his Majesty and the Cardinal. I did all that was possible to conciliate the King, and you will see what I say to M. de Valori by the accompanying copy. I wrote to him still more strongly in previous letters, and especially in the first one, written immediately after the appointment of Marshal de Broglie; but M. de Valori replied that all was in vain, and that the prejudice was ineradicable. I spoke in the same spirit to the Prussian generals, and to the King of Poland and his Ministers, and to M. Desalleurs. I took opportunities of conveying to them, and I told them personally, that I did not know of a better general, nor of one more capable than M. de Broglie; that I had often remarked his good conduct in war; that even the Secchia affair, for which he is blamed, was most honourable to him, by reason of the courage and coolness with which he collected the troops forming the rear-guard of the army. I succeeded rather better with the Saxons, though they are dissatisfied that we did not march on Pisek; but as for the King of Prussia, all that I can say or write only makes him speak more violently. I am the more grieved at this because, knowing the world as I do, and the number of persons who bear me ill-will, I feel that what is said and written against the general in question by our army is perhaps partly attributed

to me. But I hope I am too well-known to his Eminence and to the Minister and to all virtuous and impartial minds, for any credence to be given to such reports. I am a citizen, and before all else I desire the honour of the nation, the renown of the King, and the promotion of his interests. Would that I were able to prove my words by the sacrifice of my life! I was the first to say that it was not possible for me to attend to two such important tasks at once, and I made the sacrifice of the command of the army on that account."

MINISTRY OF WAR.

(*Correspondances diverses.*)

DUBROCARD, GENERAL OF ARTILLERY, TO THE MARQUIS DE BRETEUIL.

January 22, 1742.

"I begin to perceive that all the guns we have here will be useless. The King of Prussia has just shown how much he dislikes M. de Broglie by not imparting to him any of his plans, which the Marshal resents to such a degree, that, far from endeavouring to conciliate the King, or to come to a direct understanding with him, I see clearly that he intends to set him at defiance; and Frederick will return in an ill-temper to Berlin, saying that he has done all he could . . . . but that no one would meet him in any way . . . . I admit that the King of Prussia is wrong to have shown no attention to the general commanding the troops of the King of France—even had he been his greatest personal enemy—at so

critical a time, when he had to commence operations, and when it is so necessary that they should be planned with such precision. The King behaved in quite a different way. Marshal de Broglie made the first overtures. . . . But, at the same time, it is the King of Prussia who will be angered at the interruption of his plans, and his anger must be prevented, by making him hear reason, and using every endeavour to that end; if this is not done, I take the liberty of saying that our Marshal is in the wrong, and that the consequences will be serious."

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

(*Correspondance de Bavière.*)

COUNT DE SAXE TO CARDINAL FLEURY.

Pisek, February 2, 1742.

[This letter is written in very bad French, and curiously ill-spelled.]

"Your Eminence will see by the letter of the King of Prussia of the 28th of last month what are his real intentions, as to which I have never been deceived. I know not who fabricated the plan, but the French troops here consist of only twelve thousand men, and in my opinion it will be dangerous for the Saxons to remove to a distance that will place forty thousand men between them and the French, without any means of communication or of junction. It is on this account, monseigneur, that I have opposed it with all my might; if I have done wrong, I beg you to forgive me."

DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

(*Correspondance de Prusse.*)

MARSHAL DE BROGLIE TO AMELOT.

Pisek, February 19, 1742.

"I know that respect is due to crowned heads, and I have never failed in it. I believe there are few persons in the kingdom who have lived with kings as much as I, viz. with the late King of England, the present King, and the King of Sardinia; when I left them I took with me their esteem and good will. Your portrait of the King of Prussia is so good, that I defy Rigaud to make a better one. The King of Poland did me the honour of sending word that he granted me the same authority over his troops that he had accorded to Marshal Belle-Isle; it is true that the King of Prussia has not honoured me in like manner; but I do not see that the authority he gave to Marshal Belle-Isle served him much, though assuredly he had many opportunities of using it."

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

(*Correspondance de Saxe.*)

DESALLEURS TO AMELOT.

Dresden, April 19, 1742.

"M. de Neuburg, a distinguished Saxon officer, returned from Pisek yesterday; he had been sent thither to regulate the exchange of prisoners for this Court. It would be impossible to give higher praise, or more flattering and satisfactory accounts, than he gave to the King of Poland, and likewise to the

Court and town generally, concerning Marshal de Broglie's military qualities, his firmness, and his excellent intentions. From the King of Poland down to his lowest subject he is an object of general esteem, and to him is attributed the salvation of Bohemia and Saxony."

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

(*Correspondance de Bavière.*)

THE EMPEROR CHARLES VII. TO LOUIS XV.

May 10.

". . . Your Majesty can see by this how the King of Prussia has been impeded; but you must know also that the annoyance was intended not only for him, but for Marshal de Belle-Isle as well, for, on the one hand, the perfect confidence reposed in him by all the allies is well known, and, on the other, is the open aversion of the King of Prussia for Marshal de Broglie. I wish certainly to harm no one; and, on the contrary, I would entreat your Majesty to allow those persons to enjoy your favour in some other place, for it is to be wished, for the sake of the common cause, that it should be out of their power to create complications. But I feel that I must keep your Majesty informed of all these difficulties. I esteem, and have always esteemed, Marshal de Broglie, but since his illness, he is more disposed than formerly to let himself be led by others; it is more than obvious that on this occasion Count de Saxe has been the prime mover in all I have just laid before you. . . . . As for myself, without any feeling of dislike to them, I make common

cause with Marshal Belle-Isle, and, as I regulated everything in concert with him, it is only natural that I do not like to see all our arrangements for the common good destroyed; and, moreover, to risk every day the loss of so powerful an ally as the King of Prussia. The interests of your Majesty are the first to suffer, since, while you are acting towards me with so much friendliness and generosity, your intentions cannot be carried out at a time when your Majesty's General opposes everything. May I beg you will recall the perfect understanding that existed among your allies at the time when they were united, so to speak, in Marshal Belle-Isle. This is what I beg you to remember, and if that Marshal alone, who united us all together, who knows our intentions, and possesses all our confidence—if he only were with us, everything would work well and in perfect harmony. Your Majesty will be wearied with this narrative, which is extremely long, but nothing must be omitted when truth is in question, and especially in speaking to a sovereign who knows how to appreciate it."

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

(*Correspondance de Bavière.*)

LOUIS XV. TO CHARLES VII.

May, 1742.

"I have learned with regret that your Majesty believes you have grounds for dissatisfaction in the conduct of Marshal de Broglie, as nothing is dearer to me than your Majesty's interests, and that I have even sacrificed my own by refusing all the

advantages that have been offered to me. If I had believed myself to possess a better general, I would have chosen him as commander-in-chief of my forces in Germany. Marshal de Broglie's great experience, and the zeal that I know he feels for your Majesty's renown, induced me to place complete confidence in him, and I could not bestow it so unreservedly on any other. If it were advisable to recapitulate, in detail, the causes of the ill-success of my troops in Bohemia, and the want of co-operation that caused the enterprise to fail, it would be easily perceived that the fault was not to be imputed to Marshal de Broglie. Your Majesty probably has not been informed of the bad state of the army at the time he took the command, since you reproach him with inactivity. I might complain with better grounds of the small amount of support accorded to my troops in Bavaria, and of several ill-considered movements that I do not desire to recall. Marshal Belle-Isle must feel highly flattered by your Majesty's preference. I know his abilities and his attachment to your Majesty personally. But you can judge for yourself, since he has the honour to be with you, whether he is in a state to fulfil the duties of a general. His health at present incapacitates him, and he himself tells me this in all his letters. I beg your Majesty, therefore, to give less credence to the evil reports that are made to you concerning Marshal de Broglie, and to treat him with a little more confidence. You will thus augment his zeal for your Majesty's interests. He will respond to the kindness your Majesty will be good enough to show him. I have kept profoundly secret all that

your Majesty has written to me on the subject, and most certainly none of it shall be made known to him.

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

(*Correspondance de Berlin.*)

In a memorandum attached to a letter to the King of Prussia, Cardinal Fleury recurs to the reasons that necessitated the appointment of Marshal de Broglie.

"The Marshal," he says, "has his faults like all men, but he is bold and enterprising, and is trusted by his soldiers. The command of the army in Bavaria can be given him, so as to remove him from the King of Prussia, but his Prussian Majesty is *humbly entreated* to explain his wishes on a subject of such importance. However inconvenient it might be to despatch another Marshal of France to Bavaria, if M. de Broglie is displeasing to his Majesty and does not give him satisfaction, he must not be appointed. . . . If, on the contrary, the King considers it better to make no change, I venture on the liberty of suggesting that a few civil words addressed by him to the Marshal will make him agreeable and docile to all the King's wishes; his Majesty possesses in a sovereign degree the art of winning hearts; M. de Broglie's will be no exception, when the King chooses.

F.

ANXIETY OF THE FRENCH MINISTERS AND GENERALS AS TO FREDERICK'S INTENTIONS ON THE EVE OF HIS DEFECTION.

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

(*Correspondance de Prusse.*)

CARDINAL FLEURY TO FREDERICK.

February 1, 1742.

"HE [M. de Chambrier] overwhelms me with questions, and wants me to show him the letters with which your Majesty honours me, but this is what I will not do for any human being. Our conferences, which he prolongs as much as possible, usually consist of commonplaces on politics without any one of them being applied to present affairs. He wastes a good deal of my time for me, and that is all."

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

(*Correspondance de Saxe.*)

LETTER FROM MARSHAL BELLE-ISLE TO DESALLEURS.

Frankfort, February 11, 1742.

"Nothing in the whole world can equal the chaos of suspicion and sophistry into which the Court of Dresden is plunged. Nothing can tran-

quilize it about the intentions of the King of Prussia, whom it always supposes to be acting against the common cause. How can people let their imagination delude them after such a fashion? They will end, perhaps, by wearing him out and disgusting him altogether . . . and I would not be sure that their behaviour may not actually create in him the wish to lord it over us, and keep us in subjection; but for my own part I should find no difficulty in soliciting his help towards any measure tending to the common good, and I should do so without showing any of the distrust, ill-humour, or bitterness that I see imported into the matter by others. . . . If it is true that he spoke so decisively against going to Neuhaus, as he is reported to have done, it is because he is worried and harassed without necessity."

DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

(*Correspondance de l'Ambassade auprès de la Diète.*)

MARSHAL BELLE-ISLE TO DESALLEURS.

Frankfort, February 13, 1742.

"If I had been in a position to carry out the advice I gave, I should have opposed the King of Prussia in nothing until the fall of Iglau, and when, subsequently to that expedition, I should have seen that it had not answered the King's expectations, then I should have gently pointed out—after having entirely agreed with him, and not having doubted for one moment of the total retreat of the enemy from the circle[1] of Bohemia, since they had been foolhardy enough to venture to approach it—

[1] Cercle: division territoriale de certains pays.—*Littré.*

that now was the time to march forward to punish them and to deliver the allies; I should have endeavoured to show him the ease of the task, consequent on his own previous action; and I should have used every effort to make this decision emanate, as it were, from himself, as a natural result of the excellence of his action in the beginning. I believe that this plan would have succeeded much better than the blame and stubborn opposition with which he has been met; but if after all this friendliness I had found the King of Prussia irrevocably decided on pushing into Moravia, I should then have represented to him that, since he had proved himself mistaken in the first instance, and that he now proposed a second plan in opposition to the common cause, he ought not to feel offended at the endeavours of the allies to shorten the distance between their forces, to secure themselves against any eventuality and to defend Bohemia and Prague. . . . If, after this line of conduct, failure had ensued, still it is presumable that we should have left him without excuse, whereas now, by harassing him with continual opposition and indescribable suspicion, we have afforded him the most plausible pretext for throwing all the blame on us, and for taxing us with weakness and perhaps with ingratitude."

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

(*Correspondance de Bavière.*)

CARDINAL FLEURY TO MARSHAL BELLE-ISLE.

May, 22, 1742.

"You will, apparently, have had a conversation

with the King of Prussia, and I hope you may have elicited from him, some few plainer and less enigmatical words than all he writes to me. If he persists in remaining in his beloved Silesia, and in letting his troops there enjoy a pleasant rest while they live on other people, he will be not only an unserviceable but a very prejudicial ally. If you and Marshal de Broglie are bound to use all your judgment and all your abilities in the King's service, I am quite certain that you will have no other end in view than our success, and that you are both too well acquainted with the matter, not to agree as to the best course to be followed. But if, unfortunately (and up to a certain point I may be apprehensive of this), you were not of the same mind, and that there were time to consult the King of Prussia, he might then be able to reconcile and harmonize your conflicting opinions. Finally, if this were not possible, which I should consider the worst of misfortunes, then, in that case, you must obey the King's commands contained in my other letter.

"The moment is so critical that my head almost fails me, and I see no other remedy than some striking success that will restore our credit and allay the fury and jealousy of the English and the Dutch. We want a victory, and small successes, serving only to prolong the war, would be as ruinous to us as defeat."

G.

Negotiations between France and the Court of Vienna.

The following papers contain all the references I have been able to find to the alleged negotiations between Cardinal Fleury and Maria Theresa without the knowledge of the King of Prussia.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

(*Correspondance de l'Ambassade auprès de la Diète.*)

Cardinal Fleury to Marshal Belle-Isle.

September 29, 1742.

"M. Wasner ended by hinting that if the Queen were driven to extremity she would be forced to turn to the King of Prussia, or on some other sovereign who would preserve her from utter spoliation. I answered quite simply that the Elector was very moderate and reasonable, and would not push his claims so far, if the Court of Vienna made a suitable offer to him. I think that without appearing to have received information, you should listen to its delegate, and let the explanation come from him. I cannot express how impatiently I wait for the election of an emperor; on this alone depends the execution of our projects."

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

(*Correspondance de Vienne.*)

VINCENT, FRENCH CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES, TO AMELOT.

Presburg, November 2, 1741.

"M. Koch returned here a few days ago. A nobleman of this Court in whom the Queen places full confidence, though he is not a German, told me that M. de Belle-Isle's propositions to M. Koch were so exorbitant that her Majesty could not accept them, and that she was on the point of allying herself with the English, and risking the chances of war. This was the more likely as although Cardinal Fleury's reply to the Queen's last letter was civil, it closed the door to all negotiation, and left no opening even for another letter requesting an explanation. The same nobleman also said that the Queen of Hungary would have altogether given up the English, and would have favoured all the views of France against the English nation, had his Eminence been willing to hearken to her Majesty."

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

(*Correspondance de Vienne.*)

VINCENT TO AMELOT.

Vienna, January 3, 1742.

"Count de Richecour, Chamberlain to the Queen of Hungary, came to me this morning from her Majesty, to tell me that she had resolved on despatching a confidential agent privately to Paris, in order to make fresh proposals to the King, and to ask me if I thought that such a person would be received

by Cardinal Fleury. I replied that I had no doubt his Eminence would at all times receive any one coming from her Majesty, but that I should do myself the honour of writing on the subject to your Excellency. He added that the Queen had formed this resolution without having mentioned it to any of her Ministers, except M. Bartenstein, and that he begged me to keep the secret, which I promised to do. Judging by what he told me, I think that M. de Cordova is the person selected by her Majesty for this mission. He is a Spanish nobleman of great good sense, and a warm partisan of the French, and I have no doubt that M. de Mirepoix has already mentioned him to your Excellency."

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

(*Correspondance de Vienne.*)

VINCENT TO AMELOT.

Vienna, January 6, 1743.

"The same M. de Richecour came again on the following day. He stated further that he knows positively that if the Queen had hopes of retaining Bohemia and Moravia, she would be guided by what his Eminence might decide in order to satisfy the King's allies, and she would raise no difficulty as to ceding Silesia, as well as her states in Italy and Flanders. . . . He said that the Queen would as soon be deprived of all her states as of Bohemia and Moravia, because Hungary could not support itself without one or the other of those two countries, and that she would be exposed to the loss of the latter kingdom, which would be sure to rise in revolt on the first opportunity."

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

(*Correspondance de Vienne.*)

AMELOT TO VINCENT.

February 18, 1742.

"If the Queen of Hungary is bent on retaining Bohemia and Moravia, all the Cardinal's good-will can be of no avail, and it would not be worth while to initiate negotiations on a basis that the King is unable to admit."

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

(*Correspondance de Vienne.*)

March, 1742.

[A certain M. d'Egherti who has interests in Tuscany, is supposed to have come from Cardinal Fleury in order to treat. He disowns the mission by a letter which he produces. On March 4, Amelot, not being satisfied with the denial, gives orders that he be requested to depart. Before leaving Vienna, M. d'Egherti himself writes to the Cardinal, and proves by his letter that he had no mission.]

"I hastened, monseigneur," he writes, on March 16th, 1742, "to make the required declaration, for fear that the King of Prussia, who is thought at Vienna to be capriciousness itself, should seize on this frivolous pretext to break off with the King, and make terms with the Queen. When I came away it was said that her anger was on the brink of explosion, and that she was about to mark her indignation to all Europe, by publishing an alleged treaty, signed last October by the King

of Prussia, in which that sovereign promised the Queen not to come beyond Silesia. The treaty would have been made public only for the earnest remonstrance of Sir Thomas Robinson, which produced the effect that he intended."

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

(*Correspondance interceptée de la Légation de Prusse.*)

M. DE CHAMBRIER TO THE KING OF PRUSSIA.

June 1, 1742.

"The Cardinal has assured me in the strongest terms that what is imputed to him is a calumny, that nothing can be more false, and that he defied the Court of Vienna to bring forward a single proof. He added that there is no one here of the name of Fargis whom he could employ in this pretended negotiation; that the only person of that name is far removed alike by character, style of living, and ample means, from being employed on such a business; that perhaps the originators of the story have confounded the two names of Fargis and D'Egherti,[1] the latter being that of an Irishman connected with the farms of the Grand Duke in Tuscany, who has been in Vienna on farming affairs, but who received orders to leave the capital immediately, on pain of disgrace on re-entering France, as soon as the Cardinal learned through Vincent, French Secretary at Vienna, that it was rumoured that D'Egherti had been despatched thither in order to treat on the part of France."

[1] Probably this name was Doherty.

H.

MEMORANDUM FROM MARSHAL BELLE-ISLE TO THE KING, ANNEXED TO HIS ACCOUNT OF HIS POLITICAL AND MILITARY OPERATIONS IN GERMANY IN THE YEARS 1741 AND 1742.

THE following memorandum was handed to the King by Marshal Belle-Isle on his return to France in 1743. I believe it to be sufficiently interesting to be published in full. The marginal notes on the MS., which we also reproduce, are by Ledran, First Clerk of Foreign Affairs. They show us the judgment passed on Belle-Isle's action after the event by the politicians of Versailles.

ON THE KING OF PRUSSIA.

January 20.

"Our alliance with the King of Prussia has had so great an influence on the system your Majesty thought it well to adopt after the death of Charles VI., that it appears to me to be indispensable to remind your Majesty of all its separate circumstances.

"It would seem as though the King of Prussia had foreseen the approaching death of the Emperor when he despatched the Sieur de Camas to the Court.

"That Minister made several propositions to the Cardinal, but his Eminence, who had no high opinion

of the King, declined any serious negotiation, and would not advise your Majesty to enter into any engagement. M. de Camas, although a Frenchman, had no affection for France, and I myself learned from his chief that he had made very unfavourable reports to him concerning our government, our troops, our finance, and our means in general;[1] he had spoken severely of the Cardinal, asseverating strongly that, happen what might, there would never be war so long as your Majesty should follow his counsels. The said Sieur de Camas went so far as to throw doubts on the good faith and sincerity of your Minister.

"The King of Prussia, who has taken Machiavelli for his guide in political principles, was ready to believe that in another he should find the maxims he has himself adopted. The death of Charles VI. having taken place under these circumstances, and the King of Prussia having formed the designs that he made public two months later, he began to negotiate openly in all directions; he stated publicly that he was bargaining everywhere, until he should find what seemed best and most certain for him; at that time, therefore, he wrote two most urgent letters to the Cardinal, by whom they were shown to me.

"The King of Prussia was not satisfied with explaining all the political and military reasons likely to induce your Majesty to grasp at the opportunity offered, he also flattered the Cardinal on every point on which his Eminence was likely to be most accessible; but although his letters were written with all

[1] This does not prove that M. de Camas had no affection for France.

possible wit and energy, the praises of the Cardinal with which they were filled, had a contrary effect upon him, and he has often described them to me as false and base.[2] Such, therefore, was the opinion held by the King of Prussia of France and the Cardinal, and that held by his Eminence of the King, when it became necessary for your Majesty to arrive at a decision.

"The first impulse of the Cardinal was to do nothing, and that your Majesty should simply remain a spectator of the events about to take place in Germany; there were several sound reasons in favour of his natural inclination, and in fact the kingdom was not in a state to undertake a prolonged war.

"But, on further consideration by his Eminence, and the matter having been more fully discussed by your Majesty's Ministers, either in your own presence or in that of the Cardinal, it was unanimously resolved that the Imperial Crown must never be suffered to remain in the House of Austria, by being placed on the head of the Grand Duke, who, in restoring that House, would engraft on it his personal animosities and a strong determination to regain Lorraine, and would revive many other claims, which would be all the more dangerous when put forward by a very powerful prince.[3]

[2] Experience has proved that Cardinal Fleury had rightly judged the King of Prussia, and that no solid edifice could be raised on so shifting a foundation.

[3] The majority in the King's Council founded their opinion on the former policy of France against the House of Austria, and greatly erred in their conjectures. This was only too plainly demonstrated by the consequences of the war begun in 1741, which resulted, through the desire for revenge on the part of the

"The first idea of the Minister was the imperial crown only; but on going deeper into the subject it was obvious that the Elector of Bavaria, whom it was proposed to make Emperor, could not be elected without at the same time putting forward his rights and claims to the Austrian Succession, and that these two objects were inseparable.

"The Cardinal then perceived more clearly the engagements entered into by the late King with the late Elector, and renewed between your Majesty and the Elector's son, and that, finally, it was necessary to make option between failing the House of Bavaria or the House of Austria, and that inaction was not possible, because in such case both Houses would have been alienated from us, since we should have disappointed both. This fact, being plainly recognized, led next to the examination of resources, and it was then that an alliance with the King of Prussia was decided on, and the means of attaining to it with security were discussed.[4]

"The Cardinal, who had come to this decision unwillingly and by degrees, never wished for anything more than a defensive treaty, taking as its pretext the cession which the King of Prussia was to make of all his rights and claims on the duchies of Berg and

English, in the war of 1746, which was so disastrous for France. Belle-Isle was of the party most anxious for war.

[4] The engagements entered into with the House of Bavaria contained absolutely nothing which could tend to war with Austrial for the interests of Bavaria: the King's Council was well aware of this when in the Vienna treaty of peace in 1738, his Majesty made, on the contrary, a solemn engagement to guarantee the Pragmatic Sanction, in order to preserve all the Austrian States of the Emperor Charles VI. under one head.

Jülichs in favour of the Palatine House, for which cession the King, who had already guaranteed those duchies to that House, was to guarantee Lower Silesia to the King of Prussia, and that sovereign, by a separate article, was to promise his vote for the imperial crown to the Elector of Bavaria.[5]

"The King of Prussia did me the honour to say that, on the contrary, he desired an offensive and defensive treaty between us, and that we should openly make war on the Queen of Hungary, and that, while obtaining for himself and other claimants to the Succession of Austria each his share, your Majesty should also receive your share, proportioned to the immense expenditure you are about to make.

"The draft of a defensive treaty was drawn up and sent to M. de Valori, at Berlin, before my appointment as Ambassador; and at my first conferences with M. Amelot I was informed that an answer, and even news of signature were expected in the early part of January, full powers and the necessary instructions having been forwarded to M. de Valori; and, in fact, on the 2nd or 3rd of January the Berlin courier arrived, bringing a new draft for a treaty transmitted by the King of Prussia, in which, in order to gain over the King of Denmark, he proposed to attack the King of England in Germany, to seize the duchies of Bremen and Werden for Denmark, and other provinces for Sweden.

"This new proposal from the King of Prussia, in

[5] It was on this same principle that the King's important instructions of February 26, 1741, to Marshal Belle-Isle were based, on the occasion of his appointment as Ambassador to the Diet when assembled for the election of a new Emperor.

place of his signature to the treaty which had been in some sort agreed upon, only served to increase the Cardinal's distrust of and aversion to that sovereign; but as his troops and his co-operation were necessary in order to attain the ends that the Ministry had judged indispensable for your Majesty, it was thought advisable that I should proceed to Berlin, in the hope that, being invested with a higher office and a superior dignity to that of M. de Valori, and being more thoroughly acquainted with the whole matter, and with the ulterior views of your Majesty, I might have greater weight with the King, and induce him to sign the treaty which your Majesty's Ministers regarded as the fundamental basis of the whole matter. I was of the same opinion, but I wished that on our side we should do all that was necessary to render an alliance with us more honourable, and I told the Cardinal that the more he dreaded the King's double-dealing and levity, the more it behoved us to be powerful in Germany, so as to impose respect and remove the idea which M. de Camas had conveyed to him, of weakness in our Government and troops, according to information I had received from M. de Beauvau on his arrival from Berlin; the King of Prussia having spoken to him much as he spoke to me when I had the honour of seeing him.

"I omit here the reasons[6] that prevented me from going to Berlin, and which made it appear desirable that I should begin with the Ecclesiastical Electoral

[6] Those reasons are given in a few words in the important instructions of February 26, 1741.

Courts and with that of Dresden, before proceeding to the King of Prussia.

"I joined that sovereign on April 26 in his camp at Mollwitz, a few days after the battle;[7] I will recall here only the principal facts, having furnished M. Amelot with full details of the private conversations I had with his Majesty, lasting in all for more than eight hours. If your Majesty has caused the conversation of April 30 to be read to you, you will have seen with what force and freedom I spoke to the King of Prussia; that the only reason which then prevented him from signing the treaty, was that we were not prepared, and that our augmentation was not so much as ordered. Your Majesty will see, in short, that what I said to him on that occasion induced him to conclude the treaty a month later, but that I was not taken in by his civilities, which had the same effect on me and on the Cardinal, for my letter shows all the distrust I felt, and my alarm lest, his head being some day turned by fear, he may really do some act both against his inclination and his interest;[8] and that our only remedy was to place ourselves in force as soon as possible by carrying out what I had asked for in my memoranda of

[7] It was on April 9 that the Prussian army gained the victory of Mollwitz. Marshal Belle-Isle reached the King of Prussia's camp at Brieg in Silesia on April 26, 1741. On June 7, 1741, at Berlin, M. de Valori signed the treaty of alliance between the King and the King of Prussia.

[8] Thus did Marshal Belle-Isle, as he says without faith in the King of Prussia, enter into the wishes of the latter for an offensive war by France upon the House of Austria, and even desire that France should uphold and confirm him in his warlike intentions against that House by the use of all her military strength.

January, and had reiterated on every opportunity since; and, in fact, his most embarrassing charge against us was that of our dilatoriness in putting the Elector of Bavaria in force and in a state to take action, and with respect to our troops and frontiers.

"I cannot more effectually recall to your Majesty the accuracy of all these circumstances, and of all that I expressed and thought about the sovereign in question, than by appending to this extracts from my letters to M. de Valori, M. Amelot, M. de Breteuil, and M. Beauvau, and also from the letters which I received during the course of this affair from M. de Valori, with whom I was obliged to be in daily correspondence, in order to meet the humours and variations of the King of Prussia, all whose defects were perfectly well known to us, and I kept M. Amelot constantly informed of them, as will be seen by the extracts from my letters. It is, nevertheless, true that, so long as he believed our efforts would be prompt and vigorous, and that he retained the high opinion he had formed of the Elector of Bavaria, he, on his side, acted with energy; but no sooner was he master of Silesia as far as the Neisse, than he thought of nothing but repose, and was influenced on the one hand by the clamouring of his army for peace, and on the other by his anxiety as to events when he saw the dilatory march of our troops and the ill-judged manœuvres of the Elector's army.

"It was then that he made use of M. Schmettau to persuade the Elector to march on Vienna, so as to get rid of Marshal Neipperg, while he occupied himself only with the safe-keeping of his conquest.

"Such conduct cannot be too severely blamed,

and the extracts from my letters will show your Majesty what trouble and labour it gave me; but the one only remedy was more diligent action on our part, as I never ceased to represent. My letters to M. Amelot in October and November are full of distrust and dissatisfaction with the dishonesty and the uncertain conduct of the King of Prussia, which was, nevertheless, mingled with impulsive acts of generosity and displays of frankness.[9] Such for example were his replies to Lord Hyndford and to Sir Thomas Robinson; his circular letters to his Ministers at the various Courts; his orders to his Minister in London to speak in accordance with M. de Bussi, and the model draft he sent him after causing it to be minuted by M. de Valori; the recall of Baron Raasfeld, his Minister at the Hague, at your Majesty's request; and, finally, his consent that Prince Leopold of Anhalt should put the Prussian troops in motion according to my directions.[1]

"It is evident that his consent, which had been preceded by frequent refusals, did not come until

[9] This is an admission by Marshal Belle-Isle that he had suffered himself to be taken in by the King of Prussia. His negotiations with the latter had, in fact, only served to cause great embarrassment to the Elector of Bavaria, who was supported by a body of forty thousand French troops, as auxiliary forces. In the assistance thus given by France to the Elector, whose own army did not number fourteen thousand men, the accessories far surpassed the principal.

[1] Marshal Belle-Isle is silent on the perfidy of the King of Prussia respecting the Convention of Klein-Schnellendorf, signed secretly by him on October 9, 1741, with Count Neipperg, General of the Austrian army in Silesia, for a cessation of hostilities which gave that army time to march into Bohemia, there to oppose the progress of the Franco-Bavarian troops.

after the fall of Prague; thus we cannot doubt, that had the Elector followed the plan I had laid down, and entered Bohemia immediately, and had the body of troops, which only arrived in October, crossed the Rhine two months earlier, the King of Prussia would not have refused to prolong his campaign, and would, without hesitation, have marched into Moravia and Lower Austria, because he would in that case have had nothing to fear from Marshal Neipperg.

"Meanwhile all had been repaired, when Marshal de Broglie was appointed to the command of the army in Bohemia.[2] The occurrence at Strasburg had so deeply offended the King, and prejudiced him so strongly against the Marshal, that it would have been impossible to make choice of a person more disagreeable to him, and it is most unfortunate that this should not have occurred at the time to his Eminence.[3] Your Majesty will perceive, by extracts from my letters to the Cardinal, and by the copies of those from the King of Prussia to his Eminence, with what annoyance the King heard of the appointment, and, by the copy of my letter to M. de Valori, the pains that I took to conciliate his Majesty, and induce him to approve of it. In a separate memo-

[2] The appointment of Marshal de Broglie is dated December 15, 1741.

[3] In 1740, the King of Prussia had been curious to see the city of Strasburg; and had passed a few hours there incognito, but eventually he had been recognized, and Marshal de Broglie, the King's Commandant in Alsace, had shown some intention of arresting him, being of opinion that Frederick should either have announced himself publicly, or should have provided himself with a passport, although France and Germany were then at peace.

randum concerning military operations, I will take the liberty of reporting what took place on this point, and how it influenced only too decisively the resolution of the King of Saxony to withdraw from the alliance on the next campaign. My letters, however, and the pressing needs of the new King of Bohemia, added to the security of Silesia, had caused the King of Prussia to determine on coming in person to Dresden and to Prague, and thence at the head of his army into Moravia.[4]

"I believe, as do many others, that his principal object in so acting was to extend his requisitions and to plunder Moravia, which was destined for the Saxons, whom he had never liked; but it was not the less beneficial to the common cause, and would have repaired all the harm done by the capitulation of Linz.[5]

"He had obtained the consent of the King of Poland to the march of the Saxons under his orders; and his passage to Prague, in order to provision them, and to keep the corps commanded by Polastion, would have secured the execution of the design and forced the enemy to evacuate Bohemia,[6] if Marshal de Broglie, acting through Maurice de Saxe, had

[4] On January 19, 1742, the King of Prussia proceeded to Dresden, thence to Prague, and from that city into Moravia, where his army had taken Olmütz, its capital town, on December 29, 1741.

[5] The Queen of Hungary's troops had recaptured Linz, a chief town of Upper Austria, on January 24, 1742, the day the Elector of Bavaria was elected to the Imperial dignity, under the name of Charles VII.

[6] The remainder of this memorandum by Marshal de Belle-Isle is a formal impeachment of the conduct of Marshal de Broglie and Maurice de Saxe in Bohemia.

not contravened the views of the King of Prussia by the underhand dealings of which I make mention in the memorandum. It is this continual opposition, on the part of Marshal de Broglie, to matters on which the King is most sensitive, that has ended by completely disgusting him, and that induced him to renew negotiations in the interview which he had with Frischner at Olmütz.

"Your Majesty will see by the enclosed extracts from the letters, that :—

"1. The King of Prussia had announced in November that he would come to Bohemia in person in February, in order to see for himself the state of our preparations for the campaign, and that he would regulate his movements and operations accordingly.

"2. That, the King of Prussia having carried out his expressed intention even earlier than the date he had fixed, Marshal de Broglie, not satisfied with having unsettled all I had planned in concert with the King of Prussia, did not even present himself to pay his respects at Prague, nor did he take the trouble of writing to his Majesty.

"3. That he inveighed against him quite publicly, and spoke of him in terms that are unpardonable when used against sovereigns whom all should revere. The King of Prussia has been accurately informed on this head, for the Marshal's words were public, and all the noblemen of Prague, and the Austrian and Prussian emissaries, heard them repeated daily by our officers.

"4. The mission of the Count de Saxe to prevent the Saxons marching, and his using the same language as M. de Broglie concerning the King of Prussia.

"5. The orders sent to M. de Polastion not to obey the King of Prussia, and to come away if that sovereign did not march to Neuhaus.

"6. M. de Broglie's refusal to send away at that time his artillery, his convoy of flour, and his having all his biscuit consumed, in order to prove plainly that he was unable to take the field, while at the very same time he laid siege to Egra, and sent thither the Saxon artillery, in order still further to impede the projected siege of Brünn in Moravia.

"Meanwhile, the King of Prussia, who was always negotiating, being led by his habitual distrust to suspect that the Cardinal might be doing the same, had not refrained from giving battle at Czaslau, an evident proof that, so far, there was no understanding.

"It is true that the King's fright was so extreme that I was told that he had firmly resolved never to run such a risk again, and it was for that reason that, when I had the honour of seeing him after the battle of Sahay, he was more determined than ever, and completely resolved to make peace.

"The detailed accounts which I furnished to M. Amelot in my letters of June 3, 1742, clearly prove that this was his view, but he expected that peace would be made in common, and the Emperor forced to content himself with less.'

' It was on May 17 that the King of Prussia in person defeated the Austrians at Czaslau in Bohemia, thereby preventing them from reaching Prague; but, later, he allowed those very troops to march against the Franco-Bavarian army, and negotiated for peace with the Queen of Hungary through Lord Hyndford, the English Minister; but he took care not to mention that negotiation to Marshal Belle-Isle, when they met on June 3, following.

"The King of Prussia's extreme attention in sending me news of the march of Prince Charles, his eagerness that I should despatch a courier to M. de Broglie, his anxiety lest he should meet with a reverse, and his desire that I should invite the Saxons to join us, all indicate, beyond possibility of doubt, that the King of Prussia was bent on maintaining an alliance which he always had felt to be inseparable from his interests. He agreed with me on certain movements so soon as I had shown him the facility and security with which they might be undertaken, for he would run no further risk; and I am still convinced that his Majesty would never have taken the steps with which he will always be justly reproached, had he not believed M. de Broglie's army to be utterly destroyed. He did believe this, on hearing the account given by the Lieutenant-Colonel of his troops, who had remained from the commencement of the campaign with the Marshal for the sole purpose of informing the King day by day of every circumstance that occurred, down to the smallest trifle. That officer arrived in person, and drew such a picture to his Majesty's Minister of the rout and general disorder of the army, of the wretched condition of

He confined himself to giving the first intimations of the march of the Austrians against the Franco-Bavarians, commanded by Marshal de Broglie.

During that interview the King of Prussia so astonished and confounded Marshal Belle-Isle by the strength of his language on the necessity of endeavouring to terminate the war, that the Marshal, quite overwhelmed, lost consciousness, and turned so faint that he had to be laid on the floor and revived with smelling-salts and brandy.

the equipment, and the absence of any kind of order or caution in Marshal de Broglie, that he convinced the King of Prussia of the utter destruction of our army, and that only a remnant, which would be quite unable to undertake a campaign, could reach Prague.[8]

"The account given by this officer, although to some extent founded on fact, was so exaggerated that the King of Prussia was seized with alarm, and without reflection, remembering only his fright at Czaslau and Mollwitz, he decided on the only remedy that occurred to him at the moment, and immediately despatched a courier to M. Podewils ordering him to sign the treaty prepared by Lord Hyndford, and to answer with his head for the least delay. This was duly carried out.

"Your Majesty was doubtless informed of this by M. de Valori's account of the matter.

"From the narrative I have taken the liberty of laying before your Majesty, and from the accompanying extracts from letters which prove its accuracy, it is evident:—

"1. That an alliance with the King of Prussia was considered necessary by the Cardinal and all your Majesty's Ministers.[9]

"2. That when I was appointed your Ambassador, the most important and essential of the duties entrusted to me was that of inducing the King of Prussia to bind himself by a treaty.

[8] On June 4, the Austrians had attacked Marshal de Broglie and gained a complete victory; so that the Franco-Bavarian army had retired in confusion towards Prague.

[9] A simply defensive alliance.

"3. That the difficulties I encountered in my personal negotiations with him arose solely because we were not ready to act, and that we had not yet reinforced the Elector of Bavaria; he greatly feared the Russians, and that England and Saxony might unite with them before he could receive help; that, finally, he never believed that the Cardinal intended war, and he always suspected that his Eminence would be ready to come to terms on the first opportunity.

"4. That all the truths I took the liberty of laying before the King of Prussia, effected, nevertheless, the signature of the treaty a month after my departure.

"5. That he had no reason to be otherwise than satisfied with the course he had taken, so long as we were prosperous and our movements well concerted.[1]

"6. That the mediocrity of our forces, and his poor opinion of the military capacity of the Emperor, by making him uncertain of success, rendered him irritable both in speech and in action.

"7. That he was occupied only with his personal interests, and took little pains to help his allies when once in possession of his own share.[2]

"8. That, nevertheless, he has always acted sincerely and honestly with respect to the election, because, whatever happened, it would not have suited him that the Grand Duke should be

[1] Marshal Belle-Isle was apparently ignorant of the breach of faith by the King of Prussia, in entering into a convention with the General of the Austrian army in Silesia on October 9, 1741.

[2] This is the simple truth respecting the conduct of the King of Prussia in that war.

Emperor, nor would he have the Elector of Saxony—only the Elector of Bavaria could serve his purpose.[1]

"9. That, the fall of Prague having restored his confidence, he again showed himself as he had been in the beginning, and put his troops in movement, after having harshly refused to do so.

"10. That all was in readiness, when, through my loss of health, Marshal de Broglie was appointed.

"11. That the behaviour of theMarshal, added to his contradictions and his offensive utterances, totally disgusted him.

"And finally, that the ill-conduct of that General, the rout of his army on June 5, and the consequences resulting therefrom, gave the finishing stroke."

[1] A defensive alliance with the King of Prussia ought to have been entered into on that one point only.

TRANSLATORS' NOTE.

See vol. ii. p. 72.

In the original, Valori's letter concludes with a punning sentence which cannot be literally translated. It is as follows: "Vous trouverez sans doute que mes lettres sont différentes, et que je chante pour ainsi dire la palinodie ; mais je crois ce ton de musique nécessaire dans ce pays de variations."

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